

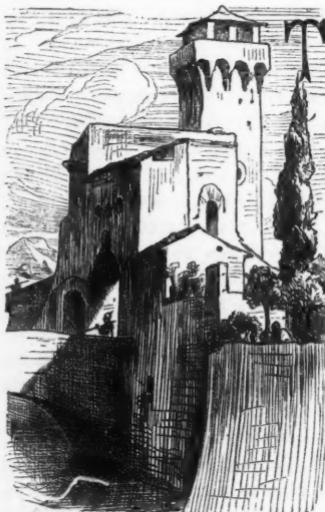
THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1863.

Romola.

CHAPTER LVII.

WHY TITO WAS SAFE.



ITO had good reasons for saying that he was safe. In the last three months, during which he had foreseen the discovery of the Medicean conspirators as a probable event, he had had plenty of time to provide himself with resources. He had been strengthening his influence at Rome and at Milan, by being the medium of secret information and indirect measures against the Frate and the popular party; he had cultivated more assiduously than ever the regard of this party by showing subtle evidence that his political convictions were entirely on their side; and all the while, instead of withdrawing his agency from the Mediceans, he had sought to be more actively employed and exclusively trusted by

them. It was easy to him to keep up this triple game. The principle of duplicity admitted by the Mediceans on their own behalf deprived them of any standard by which they could measure the trustworthiness of a colleague who had not, like themselves, hereditary interests, alliances, and prejudices, which were intensely Medicean. In their minds to deceive the opposite party was fair stratagem, to deceive their own party

was a baseness to which they felt no temptation ; and in using Tito's facile ability they were not keenly awake to the fact that the absence of traditional attachments which made him a convenient agent was also the absence of what among themselves was the chief guarantee of mutual honour. Again, the Roman and Milanese friends of the aristocratic party, or *Arrabbiati*, who were the bitterest enemies of Savonarola, carried on a system of underhand correspondence and espionage, in which the deepest hypocrisy was the best service, and demanded the heaviest pay ; so that to suspect an agent because he played a part strongly would have been an absurd want of logic. On the other hand, the Piagnoni of the popular party who had the directness that belongs to energetic conviction, were the more inclined to credit Tito with sincerity in his political adhesion to them, because he affected no religious sympathies.

By virtue of these conditions the last three months had been a time of flattering success to Tito. The result he most cared for was the securing of a future position for himself at Rome or at Milan, for he had a growing determination, when the favourable moment should come, to quit Florence for one of those great capitals where life was easier, and the rewards of talent and learning were more splendid. At present, the scale dipped in favour of Milan ; and if within the year he could render certain services to Duke Ludovico Sforza, he had the prospect of a place at the Milanese court, which outweighed the advantages of Rome.

The revelation of the Medicean conspiracy, then, had been a subject of forethought to Tito ; but he had not been able to foresee the mode in which it would be brought about. The arrest of Lamberto dell' Antella with a tell-tale letter on his person, and a bitter rancour against the Medici in his heart, was an incalculable event. It was not possible, in spite of the careful pretexts with which his agency had been guarded, that Tito should escape implication : he had never expected this in case of any wide discovery concerning the Medicean plots. But his quick mind had soon traced out the course that would secure his own safety with the fewest unpleasant concomitants. It is agreeable to keep a whole skin ; but the skin still remains an organ sensitive to the atmosphere.

His reckoning had not deceived him. That night before he returned home, he had secured the three results for which he most cared : he was to be freed from all proceedings against him on account of complicity with the Mediceans ; he was to retain his secretaryship for another year, unless he previously resigned it ; and, lastly, the price by which he had obtained these guarantees was to be kept as a State secret. The price would have been thought heavy by most men ; and Tito himself would rather not have paid it.

He had applied himself first to win the mind of Francesco Valori, who was not only one of the Ten under whom he immediately held his secretaryship, but one of the special council appointed to investigate the evidence of the plot. Francesco Valori, as we have seen, was the head of the Piagnoni, a man with certain fine qualities that were not incom-

patible with violent partisanship, with an arrogant temper that alienated his friends, nor with bitter personal animosities—one of the bitterest being directed against Bernardo del Nero. To him, in a brief private interview, after obtaining a pledge of secrecy, Tito avowed his own agency for the Mediceans—an agency induced by motives about which he was very frank, declaring at the same time that he had always believed their efforts futile, and that he sincerely preferred the maintenance of the popular government; affected to confide to Valori, as a secret, his own personal dislike for Bernardo del Nero; and after this preparation, came to the important statement that there was another Medicean plot, of which, if he obtained certain conditions from the government, he could by a journey to Siena, and into Romagna where Piero de' Medici was again trying to gather forces, obtain documentary evidence to lay before the council. To this end it was essential that his character as a Medicean agent should be unshaken for all Mediceans, and hence the fact that he had been a source of information to the authorities must be wrapped in profound secrecy. Still, some odour of the facts might escape in spite of precaution, and before Tito could incur the unpleasant consequences of acting against his friends, he must be assured of immunity from any prosecution as a Medicean, and from deprivation of office for a year to come.

These propositions did not sound in the ear of Francesco Valori precisely as they sound to us. Valori's mind was not intensely bent on the estimation of Tito's conduct; and it was intensely bent on procuring an extreme sentence against the five prisoners. There were sure to be immense efforts to save them; and it was to be wished (on public grounds) that the evidence against them should be of the strongest, so as to alarm all well-affected men at the dangers of clemency. The character of legal proceedings at that time implied that evidence was one of those desirable things which could only be come at by foul means. To catch a few people and torture them into confessing everybody's guilt was one step towards justice; and it was not always easy to see the next unless a traitor turned up. Lamberto dell' Antella had been tortured in aid of his previous willingness to tell more than he knew; nevertheless, additional and stronger facts were desirable, especially against Bernardo del Nero, who, so far as appeared hitherto, had simply refrained from betraying the late plot after having tried in vain to discourage it; for the welfare of Florence demanded that the guilt of Bernardo del Nero should be put in the strongest light. So Francesco Valori zealously believed; and perhaps he was not himself aware that the strength of his zeal was determined by his hatred. He decided that Tito's proposition ought to be accepted, laid it before his colleagues without disclosing Tito's name, and won them over to his opinion. Late in the day Tito was admitted to an audience of the Special Council, and produced a deep sensation among them by revealing another plot for ensuring the mastery of Florence to Piero de' Medici, which was to have been carried into execution in the middle of this very month of August. Documentary evidence on this subject would do more

than anything else to make the right course clear. He received a commission to start for Siena by break of day; and, besides this, he carried away with him from the council chamber a written guarantee of his immunity and of his retention of office.

Among the twenty Florentines who bent their grave eyes on Tito, as he stood gracefully before them, speaking of startling things with easy periphrasis, and with that apparently unaffected admission of being actuated by motives short of the highest which is often the intensest affectation, there were several whose minds were not too entirely pre-occupied for them to pass a new judgment on him in these new circumstances; they silently concluded that this ingenious and serviceable Greek was in future rather to be used for public needs than for private intimacy. Unprincipled men were useful, enabling those who had more scruples to keep their hands tolerably clean in a world where there was much dirty work to be done. Indeed, it was not clear to respectable Florentine brains, unless they held the Frate's extravagant belief in a possible purity and loftiness to be striven for on this earth, how life was to be carried on in any department without human instruments whom it would not be unbecoming to kick or to spit upon in the act of handing them their wages. Some of these very men who passed a tacit judgment on Tito were shortly to be engaged in a memorable transaction that could by no means have been carried through without the use of an unscrupulousness as decided as his; but, as their own bright Pulci had said for them, it is one thing to love the fruits of treachery, and another thing to love traitors.

Il tradimento a molti piace assai,
Ma il traditore a gnum non piacque mai.

The same society has had a gibbet for the murderer and a gibbet for the martyr, an execrating hiss for a dastardly act, and as loud a hiss for many a word of generous truthfulness or just insight: a mixed condition of things which is the sign, not of hopeless confusion, but of struggling order.

For Tito himself, he was not unaware that he had sunk a little in the estimate of the men who had accepted his services. He had that degree of self-contemplation which necessarily accompanies the habit of acting on well-considered reasons, of whatever quality; and if he could have chosen, he would have declined to see himself disapproved by men of the world. He had never meant to be disapproved; he had meant always to conduct himself so ably that if he acted in opposition to the standard of other men they should not be aware of it; and the barrier between himself and Romola had been raised by the impossibility of such concealment with her. He shrank from condemnatory judgments as from a climate to which he could not adapt himself. But things were not so plastic in the hands of cleverness as could be wished, and events had turned out inconveniently. He had really no rancour against Messer Bernardo del Nero; he had a personal liking for Lorenzo Tornabuoni and Giovanni Pucci. He had served them very ably, and in such a way that if their party had

been winners he would have merited high reward; but was he to relinquish all the agreeable fruits of life because their party had failed? His proffer of a little additional proof against them would probably have no influence on their fate; in fact, he felt convinced they would escape any extreme consequences; but if he had not given it, his own fortunes, which made a promising fabric, would have been utterly ruined. And what motive could any man really have, except his own interest? Florentines whose passions were engaged in their petty and precarious political schemes might have no self-interest separable from family pride and tenacity in old hatreds and attachments; a modern simpleton who swallowed whole one of the old systems of philosophy, and took the indigestion it occasioned for the signs of a divine afflux or the voice of an inward monitor, might see his interest in a form of self-conceit which he called self-rewarding virtue; fanatics who believed in the coming scourge and renovation might see their own interest in a future palm branch and white robe: but no man of clear intellect allowed his course to be determined by such puerile impulses or questionable inward fumes. Did not Pontanus, poet and philosopher of unrivalled Latinity, make the finest possible oration at Naples to welcome the French king, who had come to dethrone the learned orator's royal friend and patron? and still Pontanus held up his head and prospered. Men did not really care about these things, except when their personal spleen was touched. It was weakness only that was despised; power of any sort carried its immunity; and no man, unless by very rare good fortune, could mount high in the world without incurring a few unpleasant necessities which laid him open to enmity, and perhaps to a little hissing, when enmity wanted a pretext.

It was a faint prognostic of that hissing, gathered by Tito from certain indications when he was before the council, which gave his present conduct the character of an epoch to him, and made him dwell on it with argumentative vindication. It was not that he was taking a deeper step in wrong-doing, for it was not possible that he should feel any tie to the Mediceans to be stronger than the tie to his father; but his conduct to his father had been hidden by successful lying: his present act did not admit of total concealment—in its very nature it was a revelation. And Tito winced under his new liability to disesteem.

Well! a little patience, and in another year, or perhaps in half a year, he might turn his back on these hard, eager Florentines, with their futile quarrels and sinking fortunes. His brilliant success at Florence had had some ugly flaws in it: he had fallen in love with the wrong woman, and Baldassarre had come back under incalculable circumstances. But as Tito galloped with a loose rein towards Siena, he saw a future before him in which he would no longer be haunted by those mistakes. He had much money safe out of Florence already; he was in the fresh ripeness of eight-and-twenty; he was conscious of well-tried skill. Could he not strip himself of the past, as of rehearsal clothing, and throw away the old bundle, to robe himself for the real scene?

It did not enter into Tito's meditations on the future, that, on issuing from the council chamber and descending the stairs, he had brushed against a man whose face he had not stayed to recognize in the lamplight. The man was Ser Ceccone—also willing to serve the State by giving information against unsuccessful employers.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A FINAL UNDERSTANDING.

TITO soon returned from Siena, but almost immediately set out on another journey, from which he did not return till the seventeenth of August. Nearly a fortnight had passed since the arrest of the accused, and still they were in prison, still their fate was uncertain. Romola had felt during this interval as if all cares were suspended for her, other than watching the fluctuating probabilities concerning that fate. Sometimes they seemed strongly in favour of the prisoners; for the chances of effective interest on their behalf were heightened by delay, and an indefinite prospect of delay was opened by the reluctance of all persons in authority to incur the odium attendant on any decision. On the one side there was a loud cry that the Republic was in danger, and that lenity to the prisoners would be the signal of attack for all its enemies; on the other, there was the certainty that a sentence of death and confiscation of property passed on five citizens of distinguished name, would entail the rancorous hatred of their relatives on all who were conspicuously instrumental to such a sentence.

The final judgment properly lay with the Eight, who presided over the administration of criminal justice; and the sentence depended on a majority of six votes. But the Eight shrank from their onerous responsibility, and asked in this exceptional case to have it shared by the Signoria (or the Gonfaloniere and the eight Priors). The Signoria in its turn shrugged its shoulders, and proposed the appeal to the Great Council. For, according to a law passed by the earnest persuasion of Savonarola nearly three years before, whenever a citizen was condemned to death by the fatal six votes (called the *sei fave or six beans*, beans being in more senses than one the political pulse of Florence), he had the right of appealing from that sentence to the Great Council.

But in this stage of the business, the friends of the accused resisted the appeal, determined chiefly by the wish to gain delay; and, in fact, strict legality required that sentence should have been passed prior to the appeal. Their resistance prevailed, and a middle course was taken: the sentence was referred to a large assembly convened on the seventeenth, consisting of all the higher magistracies, the smaller council or senate of eighty, and a select number of citizens.

On this day Romola, with anxiety heightened by the possibility that

before its close her godfather's fate might be decided, had obtained leave to see him for the second time, but only in the presence of witnesses. She had returned to the Via de' Bardi in company with her cousin Brigida, still ignorant whether the council had come to any decisive issue; and Monna Brigida had gone out again to await the momentous news at the house of a friend belonging to one of the magistracies, that she might bring back authentic tidings as soon as they were to be had.

Romola had sunk on the first seat in the bright saloon, too much agitated, too sick at heart to care about her place, or be conscious of discordance in the objects that surrounded her. She sat with her back to the door, resting her head on her hands. It seemed a long while since Monna Brigida had gone, and Romola was expecting her return. But when the door opened she knew it was not Monna Brigida who entered.

Since she had parted from Tito on that memorable night, she had had no external proof to warrant her belief that he had won his safety by treachery; on the contrary, she had had evidence that he was still trusted by the Mediceans and was believed by them to be accomplishing certain errands of theirs in Romagna, under cover of fulfilling a commission of the government. For the obscurity in which the evidence concerning the conspirators was shrouded allowed it to be understood that Tito had escaped any implication.

But Romola's suspicion was not to be dissipated: her horror of his conduct towards Baldassarre projected itself over every conception of his acts; it was as if she had witnessed him committing a murder and had had a diseased impression ever after that his hands were covered with fresh blood.

As she heard his step on the stone floor, a chill shudder passed through her; she could not turn round, she could not rise to give any greeting. He did not speak, but after an instant's pause took a seat on the other side of the table just opposite to her. Then she raised her eyes and looked at him; but she was mute. He did not show any irritation, but said, coolly—

"This meeting corresponds with our parting, Romola. But I understand that it is a moment of terrible suspense. I am come, however, if you will listen to me, to bring you the relief of hope."

She started, and altered her position, but looked at him dubiously.

"It will not be unwelcome to you to hear—even though it is I who tell it—that the council is prorogued till the twenty-first. The Eight have been frightened at last into passing a sentence of condemnation, but the demand has now been made on behalf of the condemned for an appeal to the Great Council."

Romola's face lost its dubious expression; she asked eagerly—

"And when is it to be made?"

"It has not yet been granted; but it *may* be granted. The council is to meet again on the twenty-first to deliberate whether the appeal shall be allowed or not. In the meantime there is an interval of three days in

which chances may occur in favour of the prisoners—in which interest may be used on their behalf."

Romola started from her seat. The colour had risen to her face like a visible thought, and her hands trembled. In that moment her feeling towards Tito was forgotten.

"Possibly," said Tito, also rising, "your own intention may have anticipated what I was going to say. You are thinking of the Frate."

"I am," said Romola, looking at him with surprise. "Has he done anything? Is there anything to tell me?"

"Only this. It was Messer Francesco Valori's bitterness and violence which chiefly determined the course of things in the council to-day. Half the men who gave in their opinion against the prisoners were frightened into it, and there are numerous friends of Fra Girolamo both in this Special Council and out of it who are strongly opposed to the sentence of death—Piero Guicciardini, for example, who is one member of the Signoria that made the stoutest resistance; and there is Giovan Battista Ridolfi, who, Piagnone as he is, will not lightly forgive the death of his brother Niccolò."

"But how can the Appeal be denied," said Romola, indignantly, "when it is the law—when it was one of the chief glories of the popular government to have passed the law?"

"They call this an exceptional case. Of course there are ingenious arguments, but there is much more of loud bluster about the danger of the republic. But, you see, no opposition could prevent the assembly from being prorogued, and a certain powerful influence rightly applied during the next three days might determine the wavering courage of those who desire that the Appeal should be granted, and might even give a check to the headlong enmity of Francesco Valori. It happens to have come to my knowledge that the Frate has so far interfered as to send a message to him in favour of Lorenzo Tornabuoni. I know you can sometimes have access to the Frate: it might at all events be worth while to use your privilege now."

"It is true," said Romola, with an air of abstraction. "I cannot believe that the Frate would approve denying the Appeal."

"I heard it said by more than one person in the court of the Palazzo, before I came away, that it would be to the everlasting discredit of Fra Girolamo if he allowed a government which is almost entirely made up of his party, to deny the Appeal, without entering his protest, when he has been boasting in his books and sermons that it was he who got the law passed.* But, between ourselves, with all respect for your Frate's ability, my Romola, he had got into the practice of preaching that form of human

* The most recent, and in several respects the best, biographer of Savonarola, Signor Villari, endeavours to show that the Law of Appeal ultimately enacted, being wider than the law originally contemplated by Savonarola, was a source of bitter annoyance to him, as a contrivance of the aristocratic party for attaching to the measures of the popular government the injurious results of licence. But in taking this view the

sacrifices called killing tyrants and wicked malcontents which some of his followers are likely to think inconsistent with lenity in the present case."

"I know, I know," said Romola, with a look and tone of pain. "But he is driven into those excesses of speech. It used to be different. I will ask for an interview. I cannot rest without it. I trust in the greatness of his heart."

She was not looking at Tito; her eyes were bent with a vague gaze towards the ground, and she had no distinct consciousness that the words she heard came from her husband.

"Better lose no time, then," said Tito, with unmixed suavity, moving his cap round in his hands as if he were about to put it on and depart. "And now, Romola, you will perhaps be able to see, in spite of prejudice, that my wishes go with yours in this matter. You will not regard the misfortune of my safety as an offence."

Something like an electric shock passed through Romola: it was the full consciousness of her husband's presence returning to her. She looked at him without speaking.

"At least," he added, in a slightly harder tone, "you will endeavour to base our intercourse on some other reasoning than that because an evil deed is possible, *I* have done it. Am I alone to be beyond the pale of your extensive charity?"

The feeling which had been driven back from Romola's lips a fortnight before rose again with the gathered force of a tidal wave. She spoke with a decision which told him that she was careless of consequences.

"It is too late, Tito. There is no killing the suspicion that deceit has once begotten. And now I know everything. I know who that old man was: he was your father, to whom you owe everything—to whom you owe more than if you had been his own child. By the side of that, it is a small thing that you broke my trust and my father's. As long as you deny the truth about that old man, there is a horror rising between us: the law that should make us one can never be obeyed. I too am a human being. I have a soul of my own that abhors your actions. Our union is a pretence—as if a perpetual lie could be a sacred marriage."

Tito did not answer immediately. When he did speak it was with a calculated caution, that was stimulated by alarm.

"And you mean to carry out that independence by quitting me, I presume?"

"I desire to quit you," said Romola, impetuously.

"And supposing I do not submit to part with what the law gives me some security for retaining? You will then, of course, proclaim your

estimable biographer lost sight of the fact that, not only in his sermons but in a deliberately prepared book (*the Compendium Revelationum*) written long after the Appeal had become law, Savonarola enumerates among the benefits secured to Florence, "*the Appeal from the Six Votes, advocated by me, for the greater security of the citizens.*"

reasons in the ear of all Florence. You will bring forward your mad assassin, who is doubtless ready to obey your call, and you will tell the world that you believe his testimony because he is so rational as to desire to assassinate me. You will first inform the Signoria that I am a Medicean conspirator, and then you will inform the Mediceans that I have betrayed them, and in both cases you will offer the excellent proof that you believe me capable in general of everything bad. It will certainly be a striking position for a wife to adopt. And if, on such evidence, you succeed in holding me up to infamy, you will have surpassed all the heroines of the Greek drama."

He paused a moment, but she stood mute. He went on with the sense of mastery.

"I believe you have no other grievance against me except that I have failed in fulfilling some lofty indefinite conditions on which you gave me your wifely affection, so that, by withdrawing it, you have gradually reduced me to the careful supply of your wants as a fair Piagnone of high condition and liberal charities. I think your success in gibbeting me is not certain. But doubtless you would begin by winning the ear of Messer Bernardo del Nero?"

"Why do I speak of anything?" cried Romola, in anguish, sinking on her chair again. "It is hateful in me to be thinking of myself!"

She did not notice when Tito left the room, or know how long it was before the door opened to admit Monna Brigida. But in that instant she started up and said,

"Cousin, we must go to San Marco directly. I must see my confessor, Fra Salvestro."

CHAPTER LIX.

PLEADING.

THE morning was in its early brightness when Romola was again on her way to San Marco, having obtained through Fra Salvestro, the evening before, the promise of an interview with Fra Girolamo in the chapter-house of the convent. The rigidity with which Savonarola guarded his life from all the pretexts of calumny made such interviews very rare, and whenever they were granted, they were kept free from any appearance of mystery. For this reason the hour chosen was one at which there were likely to be other visitors in the outer cloisters of San Marco.

She chose to pass through the heart of the city that she might notice the signs of public feeling. Every loggia, every convenient corner of the piazza, every shop that made a rendezvous for gossips, was astir with the excitement of gratuitous debate; a languishing trade tending to make political discussion all the more vigorous. It was clear that the parties for and against the death of the conspirators were bent on making the

fullest use of the three days' interval in order to determine the popular mood. Already handbills were in circulation; some presenting, in large print, the alternative of justice on the conspirators or ruin to the republic, others in equally large print urging the observance of the law and the granting of the Appeal. Round these jutting islets of black capitals there were lakes of smaller characters setting forth arguments less necessary to be read; for it was an opinion entertained at that time (in the first flush of triumph at the discovery of printing), that there was no argument more widely convincing than question-begging phrases in large type.

Romola, however, cared especially to become acquainted with the arguments in smaller type, and though obliged to hasten forward she looked round anxiously as she went that she might miss no opportunity of securing copies. For a long way she saw none but such as were in the hands of eager readers, or else fixed on the walls, from which in some places the *sbirri* were tearing them down. But at last, passing behind San Giovanni with a quickened pace that she might avoid the many acquaintances who frequented the piazza, she saw Bratti with a stock of handbills which he appeared to be exchanging for small coin with the passers-by. She was too familiar with the humble life of Florence for Bratti to be any stranger to her, and turning towards him she said, "Have you two sorts of handbills, Bratti? Let me have them quickly."

"Two sorts," said Bratti, separating the wet sheets with a slowness that tried Romola's patience. "There's 'Law,' and there's 'Justice.'"

"Which sort do you sell most of?"

"'Justice'—'Justice' goes the quickest,—so I raised the price and made it two danari. But then I bethought me the 'Law' was good ware too, and had as good a right to be charged for as 'Justice'; for people set no store by cheap things, and if I sold the 'Law' at one danaro, I should be doing it a wrong. And I'm a fair trader. 'Law,' or 'Justice,' it's all one to me; they're good wares. I got 'em both for nothing, and I sell 'em at a fair profit. But you'll want more than one of a sort?"

"No, no: here's a white quattrino for the two," said Romola, folding up the bills and hurrying away.

She was soon in the outer cloisters of San Marco, where Fra Salvestro was awaiting her under the cloister, but did not notice the approach of her light step. He was chatting, according to his habit, with lay visitors; for under the auspices of a government friendly to the Frate, the timidity about frequenting San Marco, which had followed on the first shock of the excommunication, had been gradually giving way. In one of these lay visitors she recognized a well-known satellite of Francesco Valori, named Andrea Cambini, who was narrating or expounding with emphatic gesticulation, while Fra Salvestro was listening with that air of trivial curiosity which tells that the listener cares very much about news and very little about its quality. This characteristic of her confessor, which was always repulsive to Romola, was made exasperating to her at

this moment by the certainty she gathered, from the disjointed words which reached her ear, that Cambini was narrating something relative to the fate of the conspirators. She chose not to approach the group, but as soon as she saw that she had arrested Fra Salvestro's attention, she turned towards the door of the chapter-house, while he, making a sign of approval, disappeared within the inner cloister. A lay brother stood ready to open the door of the chapter-house for her, and closed it behind her as she entered.

Once more looked at by those sad frescoed figures which had seemed to be mourning with her at the death of her brother Dino, it was inevitable that something of that scene should come back to her; but the intense occupation of her mind with the present made the remembrance less a retrospect than an indistinct recurrence of impressions which blended themselves with her agitating fears, as if her actual anxiety were a revival of the strong yearning she had once before brought to this spot—to be repelled by marble rigidity. She gave no space for the remembrance to become more definite, for she at once opened the handbills, thinking she should perhaps be able to read them in the interval before Fra Girolamo appeared. But by the time she had read to the end of the one that recommended the observance of the law, the door was opening, and doubling up the papers she stood expectant.

When the Frate had entered she knelt, according to the usual practice of those who saw him in private; but as soon as he had uttered a benedictory greeting she rose and stood opposite to him at a few yards' distance. Owing to his seclusion since he had been excommunicated, it had been an unusually long while since she had seen him, and the late months had visibly deepened in his face the marks of overtaxed mental activity and bodily severities; and yet Romola was not so conscious of this change as of another, which was less definable. Was it that the expression of serene elevation and pure human fellowship which had once moved her was no longer present in the same force, or was it that the sense of his being divided from her in her feeling about her godfather roused the slumbering sources of alienation, and marred her own vision? Perhaps both causes were at work. Our relations with our fellow-men are most often determined by coincident currents of that sort; the inexcusable word or deed seldom comes until after affection or reverence has been already enfeebled by the strain of repeated excuses.

It was true that Savonarola's glance at Romola had some of that hardness which is caused by an egoistic prepossession. He divined that the interview she had sought was to turn on the fate of the conspirators, a subject on which he had already had to quell inner voices that might become loud again when encouraged from without. Seated in his cell, correcting the sheets of his *Triumph of the Cross*, it was easier to repose on a resolution of neutrality.

"It is a question of moment, doubtless, on which you wished to see me, my daughter," he began, in a tone which was gentle rather from

self-control than from immediate inclination. "I know you are not wont to lay stress on small matters."

"Father, you know what it is before I tell you," said Romola, forgetting everything else as soon as she began to pour forth her plea. " You know what I am caring for—it is for the life of the old man I love best in the world. The thought of him has gone together with the thought of my father as long as I remember the daylight. That is my warrant for coming to you, even if my coming should have been needless. Perhaps it is: perhaps you have already determined that your power over the hearts of men shall be used to prevent them from denying to Florentines a right which you yourself helped to earn for them."

"I meddle not with the functions of the State, my daughter," said Fra Girolamo, strongly disinclined to reopen externally a debate which he had already gone through inwardly. " I have preached and laboured that Florence should have a good government, for a good government is useful to the perfecting of the Christian life; but I keep away my hands from particular affairs, which it is the office of experienced citizens to administer."

"Surely, father——" Romola broke off. She had uttered this first word almost impetuously, but she was checked by the counter agitation of feeling herself in an attitude of remonstrance towards the man who had been the source of guidance and strength to her. In the act of rebelling she was bruising her own reverence.

Savonarola was too keen not to divine something of the conflict that was arresting her—too noble, deliberately to assume in calm speech that self-justifying evasiveness into which he was often hurried in public by the crowding impulses of the orator.

"Say what is in your heart; speak on, my daughter," he said, standing with his arms laid one upon the other, and looking at her with quiet expectation.

"I was going to say, father, that this matter is surely of higher moment than many about which I have heard you preach and exhort fervidly. If it belonged to you to urge that men condemned for offences against the State should have the right to appeal to the Great Council—if—" Romola was getting eager again—"if you count it a glory to have won that right for them, can it less belong to you to declare yourself against the right being denied to almost the first men who need it? Surely that touches the Christian life more closely than whether you knew beforehand that the Dauphin would die, or whether Pisa will be conquered."

There was a subtle movement, like a subdued sign of pain, in Savonarola's strong lips, before he began to speak.

"My daughter, I speak as it is given me to speak—I am not master of the times when I may become the vehicle of knowledge beyond the common lights of men. In this case I have no illumination beyond what wisdom may give to those who are charged with the safety of the State,

As to the law of Appeal against the Six Votes, I laboured to have it passed in order that no Florentine should be subject to loss of life and goods through the private hatred of a few who might happen to be in power; but these five men, who have desired to overthrow a free government and restore a corrupt tyrant, have been condemned with the assent of a large assembly of their fellow-citizens. They refused at first to have their cause brought before the Great Council. They have lost the right to the appeal."

"How can they have lost it?" said Romola. "It is the right to appeal against condemnation, and they have never been condemned till now; and, forgive me, father, it *is* private hatred that would deny them the appeal; it *is* the violence of the few that frightens others; else why was the assembly divided again directly, after it had seemed to agree? And if anything weighs against the observance of the law, let this weigh *for* it—this, that you used to preach more earnestly than all else, that there should be no place given to hatred and bloodshed because of these party strifes, so that private ill-will should not find its opportunities in public acts. Father, you *know* that there is private hatred concerned here: will it not dishonour you not to have interposed on the side of mercy, when there are many who hold that it is also the side of law and justice?"

"My daughter," said Fra Girolamo, with more visible emotion than before, "there is a mercy which is weakness, and even treason against the common good. The safety of Florence, which means even more than the welfare of Florentines, now demands severity, as it once demanded mercy. It is not only for a past plot that these men are condemned, but also for a plot which has not yet been executed; and the devices that were leading to its execution are not put an end to: the tyrant is still gathering his forces in Romagna, and the enemies of Florence, that sit in the highest places of Italy, are ready to hurl any stone that will crush her."

"What plot?" said Romola, reddening, and trembling with alarmed surprise.

"You carry papers in your hand, I see," said Fra Girolamo, pointing to the handbills. "One of them will, perhaps, tell you that the government has had new information."

Romola hastily opened the handbill she had not yet read, and saw that the government had now positive evidence of a second plot, which was to have been carried out in this August time. To her mind it was like reading a confirmation that Tito had won his safety by foul means; his pretence of wishing that the Frate should exert himself on behalf of the condemned only helped the wretched conviction. She crushed up the paper in her hand, and, turning to Savonarola, she said, with new passion, "Father, what safety can there be for Florence when the worst man can always escape? And," she went on, a sudden flash of remembrance coming from the thought about her husband, "have not you yourself encouraged this deception which corrupts the life of Florence, by wanting more favour to be shown to Lorenzo Tornabuoni, who has worn two faces,

and flattered you with a show of affection, when my godfather has always been honest? Ask all Florence who of those five men has the truest heart, and there will not be many who will name any other name than Bernardo del Nero. You did interpose with Francesco Valori for the sake of one prisoner: you have *not* then been neutral; and you know that your word will be powerful."

"I do not desire the death of Bernardo," said Savonarola, colouring deeply. "It would be enough if he were sent out of the city."

"Then why do you not speak to save an old man of seventy-five from dying a death of ignominy—to give him at least the fair chances of the law?" burst out Romola, the impetuosity of her nature so roused that she forgot everything but her indignation. "It is not that you feel bound to be neutral; else why did you speak for Lorenzo Tornabuoni? You spoke for him because he is more friendly to San Marco; my godfather feigns no friendship. It is not then as a Medicean that my godfather is to die; it is as a man you have no love for!"

When Romola paused, with cheeks glowing, and with quivering lips, there was dead silence. As she saw Fra Girolamo standing motionless before her, she seemed to herself to be hearing her own words over again; words that seemed in this echo of consciousness to be in strange, painful dissonance with the memories that made part of his presence to her. The moments of silence were expanded by gathering compunction and self-doubt. She had committed sacrilege in her passion. And even the sense that she could retract nothing of her plea, that her mind could not submit itself to Savonarola's negative, made it the more needful to her to satisfy those reverential memories. With a sudden movement towards him, she said,

"Forgive me, father; it is pain to me to have spoken those words—yet I cannot help speaking. I am little and feeble compared with you; you brought me light and strength. But I submitted because I felt the proffered strength—because I saw the light. Now I cannot see it. Father, you yourself declare that there comes a moment when the soul must have no guide but the voice within it, to tell whether the consecrated thing has sacred virtue. And therefore I must speak."

Savonarola had that readily roused resentment towards opposition, hardly separable from a power-loving and powerful nature, accustomed to seek great ends that cast a reflected grandeur on the means by which they are sought. His sermons have much of that red flame in them. And if he had been a meaner man his susceptibility might have shown itself in irritation at Romola's accusatory freedom, which was in strong contrast with the deference he habitually received from his disciples. But at this moment such feelings were nullified by that hard struggle which made half the tragedy of his life—the struggle of a mind possessed by a never-silent hunger after purity and simplicity, yet caught in a tangle of egoistic demands, false ideas, and difficult outward conditions, that made simplicity impossible. Keenly alive to all the

suggestions of Romola's remonstrating words, he was rapidly surveying, as he had done before, the courses of action that were open to him, and their probable results. But it was a question on which arguments could seem decisive only in proportion as they were charged with feeling, and he had received no impulse that could alter his bias. He looked at Romola and said—

" You have full pardon for your frankness, my daughter. You speak, I know, out of the fulness of your family affections. But these affections must give way to the needs of the republic. If those men, who have a close acquaintance with the affairs of the State, believe, as I understand they do, that the public safety requires the extreme punishment of the law to fall on those five conspirators, I cannot control their opinion, seeing that I stand aloof from such affairs."

" Then you desire that they should die? You desire that the Appeal should be denied them?" said Romola, feeling anew repelled by a vindication which seemed to her to have the nature of a subterfuge.

" I have said that I do not desire their death."

" Then," said Romola, her indignation rising again, " you can be indifferent that Florentines should inflict death which you do not desire, when you might have protested against it—when you might have helped to hinder it, by urging the observance of a law which you held it good to get passed. Father, you used not to stand aloof: you used not to shrink from protesting. Do not say you cannot protest where the lives of men are concerned; say rather, you desire their death. Say rather, you hold it good for Florence that there shall be more blood and more hatred. Will the death of five Mediceans put an end to parties in Florence? Will the death of a noble old man like Bernardo del Nero save a city that holds such men as Dolfo Spini?"

" My daughter, it is enough. The cause of freedom, which is the cause of God's kingdom upon earth, is often most injured by the enemies who carry within them the power of certain human virtues. The wickedest man is often not the most insurmountable obstacle to the triumph of good."

" Then why do you say again, that you do not desire my godfather's death?" said Romola, in mingled anger and despair. " Rather, you hold it the more needful he should die because he is the better man. I cannot unravel your thoughts, father; I cannot hear the real voice of your judgment and conscience."

There was a moment's pause. Then Savonarola said, with keener emotion than he had yet shown,

" Be thankful, my daughter, if your own soul has been spared perplexity; and judge not those to whom a harder lot has been given. You see one ground of action in this matter. I see many. I have to choose that which will further the work entrusted to me. The end I seek is one to which minor respects must be sacrificed. The death of five men—were they less guilty than these—is a light matter weighed

against the withstanding of the vicious tyrannies which stifle the life of Italy, and foster the corruption of the Church ; a light matter weighed against the furthering of God's kingdom upon earth, the end for which I live and am willing myself to die."

Under any other circumstances, Romola would have been sensitive to the appeal at the beginning of Savonarola's speech ; but at this moment she was so utterly in antagonism with him, that what he called perplexity seemed to her sophistry and doubleness ; and as he went on, his words only fed that flame of indignation, which now again, more fully than ever before, lit up the memory of all his mistakes, and made her trust in him seem to have been a purblind delusion. She spoke almost with bitterness.

"Do you then know so well what will further the coming of God's kingdom, father, that you will dare to despise the plea of mercy—of justice—of faithfulness to your own teaching ? Has the French king then brought renovation to Italy ? Take care, father, lest your enemies have some reason when they say, that in your visions of what will further God's kingdom you see only what will strengthen your own party."

"And that is true !" said Savonarola, with flashing eyes. Romola's voice had seemed to him in that moment the voice of his enemies. "The cause of my party *is* the cause of God's kingdom."

"I do not believe it !" said Romola, her whole frame shaken with passionate repugnance. "God's kingdom is something wider—else, let me stand outside it with the beings that I love."

The two faces were lit up, each with an opposite emotion, each with an opposite certitude. Further words were impossible. Romola hastily covered her head and went out in silence.

CHAPTER LX.

THE SCAFFOLD.

THREE days later the moon that was just surmounting the buildings of the piazza in front of the Old Palace within the hour of midnight, did not make the usual broad lights and shadows on the pavement. Not a hand's breadth of pavement was to be seen, but only the heads of an eager struggling multitude. And instead of that background of silence in which the patterning footsteps and buzzing voices, the lute-thrumming or rapid scampering of the many night wanderers of Florence stood out in obtrusive distinctness, there was the background of a roar from mingled shouts and imprecations, tramplings and pushings, and accidental clashing of weapons, across which nothing was distinguishable but a darting shriek or the heavy dropping toll of a bell.

Almost all who could call themselves the public of Florence were awake at that hour, and either enclosed within the limits of that piazza, or

struggling to enter it. Within the palace were still assembled in the council chamber all the chief magistracies, the eighty members of the senate, and the other select citizens who had been in hot debate through long hours of daylight and torchlight whether the Appeal should be granted or whether the sentence of death should be executed on the prisoners forthwith, to forestall the dangerous chances of delay. And the debate had been so much like fierce quarrel that the noise from the council chamber had reached the crowd outside. Only within the last hour had the question been decided: the Signoria had remained divided, four of them standing out resolutely for the Appeal in spite of the strong argument that if they did not give way their houses should be sacked, until Francesco Valori, in brief and furious speech, made the determination of his party more ominously distinct by declaring that if the Signoria would not defend the liberties of the Florentine people by executing those five perfidious citizens, there would not be wanting others who would take that cause in hand to the peril of all who opposed it. The Florentine Cato triumphed. When the votes were counted again, the four obstinate white beans no longer appeared; the whole nine were of the fatal affirmative black, deciding the death of the five prisoners without delay—deciding also, only tacitly and with much more delay, the death of Francesco Valori.

And now, while the judicial Eight were gone to the Bargello to prepare for the execution, the five condemned men were being led barefoot and in irons through the midst of the council. It was their friends who had contrived this: would not Florentines be moved by the visible association of such cruel ignominy with two venerable men like Bernardo del Nero and Niccolò Ridolfi, who had taken their bias long before the new order of things had come to make Medicceanism retrograde—with two brilliant popular young men like Tornabuoni and Pucci, whose absence would be felt as a haunting vacancy wherever there was a meeting of chief Florentines? It was useless: such pity as could be awakened now was of that hopeless sort which leads not to rescue, but to the tardier action of revenge.

While this scene was passing upstairs Romola stood below against one of the massive pillars in the court of the palace, expecting the moment when her godfather would appear, on his way to execution. By the use of strong interest she had gained permission to visit him in the evening of this day, and remain with him until the result of the council should be determined. And now she was waiting with his confessor to follow the guard that would lead him to the Bargello. Her heart was bent on clinging to the presence of the childless old man to the last moment, as her father would have done, and she had overpowered all remonstrances. Giovan Battista Ridolfi, a disciple of Savonarola, who was going in bitterness to behold the death of his elder brother Niccolò, had promised that she should be guarded, and now stood by her side.

Tito, too, was in the palace; but Romola had not seen him. Since the evening of the seventeenth they had avoided each other, and Tito

only knew by inference from the report of the Frate's neutrality that her pleading had failed. He was now surrounded with official and other personages, both Florentine and foreign, who had been awaiting the issue of the long-protracted council, maintaining, except when he was directly addressed, the subdued air and grave silence of a man whom actual events are placing in a painful state of strife between public and private feeling. When an allusion was made to his wife in relation to those events, he implied that, owing to the violent excitement of her mind, the mere fact of his continuing to hold office under a government concerned in her god-father's condemnation, roused in her a diseased hostility towards him; so that for her sake he felt it best not to approach her.

"Ah, the old Bardi blood!" said Cennini, with a shrug. "I shall not be surprised if this business shakes *her* loose from the Frate, as well as some others I could name."

"It is excusable in a woman, who is doubtless beautiful, since she is the wife of Messer Tito," said a young French envoy, smiling and bowing to Tito, "to think that her affections must overrule the good of the State, and that nobody is to be beheaded who is anybody's cousin; but such a view is not to be encouraged in the male population. It seems to me your Florentine polity is much weakened by it."

"That is true," said Niccolò Macchiavelli; "but where personal ties are strong, the hostilities they raise must be taken due account of. Many of these halfway severities are mere hotheaded blundering. The only safe blows to be inflicted on men and parties are the blows that are too heavy to be avenged."

"Niccolò," said Cennini, "there is a clever wickedness in thy talk sometimes that makes me mistrust thy pleasant young face as if it were a mask of Satan."

"Not at all, my good Domenico," said Macchiavelli, smiling, and laying his hand on the elder's shoulder. "Satan was a blunderer, an introducer of *novità*, who made a stupendous failure. If he had succeeded, we should all have been worshipping him, and his portrait would have been more flattered."

"Well, well," said Cennini, "I say not thy doctrine is not too clever for Satan: I only say it is wicked enough for him."

"I tell you," said Macchiavelli, "my doctrine is the doctrine of all men who seek an end a little farther off than their own noses. Ask our Frate, our prophet, how his universal renovation is to be brought about: he will tell you, first, by getting a free and pure government; and since it appears that cannot be done by making all Florentines love each other, it must be done by cutting off every head that happens to be obstinately in the way. Only if a man incurs odium by sanctioning a severity that is not thorough enough to be final, he commits a blunder. And something like that blunder, I suspect, the Frate has committed. It was an occasion on which he might have won some lustre by exerting himself to maintain the Appeal; instead of that, he has lost lustre, and has gained no strength."

Before any one else could speak, there came the expected announcement that the prisoners were about to leave the council chamber; and the majority of those who were present hurried towards the door, intent on securing the freest passage to the Bargello in the rear of the prisoners' guard ; for the scene of the execution was one that drew alike those who were moved by the deepest passions and those who were moved by the coldest curiosity.

Tito was one of those who remained behind. He had a native repugnance to sights of death and pain, and five days ago whenever he had thought of this execution as a possibility he had hoped that it would not take place, and that the utmost sentence would be exile: his own safety demanded no more. But now he felt that it would be a welcome guarantee of his security when he had learned that Bernardo del Nero's head was off the shoulders. The new knowledge and new attitude towards him disclosed by Romola on the day of his return, had given him a new dread of the power she possessed to make his position insecure. If any act of hers only succeeded in making him an object of suspicion and odium, he foresaw not only frustration, but frustration under unpleasant circumstances. Her belief in Baldassarre had clearly determined her wavering feelings against further submission, and if her godfather lived, she would win him to share her belief without much trouble. Romola seemed more than ever an unmanageable fact in his destiny. But if Bernardo del Nero were dead, the difficulties that would beset her in placing herself in opposition to her husband would probably be insurmountable to her shrinking pride. Therefore Tito had felt easier when he knew that the Eight had gone to the Bargello to order the instant erection of the scaffold. Four other men—his intimates and confederates—were to die, besides Bernardo del Nero. But a man's own safety is a god that sometimes makes very grim demands. Tito felt them to be grim: even in the pursuit of what was agreeable, this paradoxical life forced upon him the desire for what was disagreeable. But he had had other experience of this sort, and as he heard through the open doorway the shuffle of many feet and the clanking of metal on the stairs, he was able to answer the questions of the young French envoy without showing signs of any other feeling than that of sad resignation to State necessities.

Those sounds fell on Romola as if her power of hearing had been exalted along with every other sensibility of her nature. She needed no arm to support her; she shed no tears. She felt that intensity of life which seems to transcend both grief and joy—in which the mind seems to itself akin to elder forces that wrought out existence before the birth of pleasure and pain. Since her godfather's fate had been decided, the previous struggle of feeling in her had given way to an identification of herself with him in these supreme moments: she was inwardly asserting for him that, if he suffered the punishment of treason, he did not deserve the name of traitor; he was the victim to a collision between two kinds of faithfulness. It was not given to him to die for the noblest cause, and

yet he died because of his nobleness. He might have been a meaner man and found it easier not to incur this guilt. Romola was feeling the full force of that sympathy with the individual lot that is continually opposing itself to the formulæ by which actions and parties are judged. She was treading the way with her second father to the scaffold, and nerving herself to defy ignominy by the consciousness that it was not deserved.

The way was fenced in by three hundred armed men, who had been placed as a guard by the orders of Francesco Valori, for among the apparent contradictions that belonged to this event, not the least striking was the alleged alarm on the one hand at the popular rage against the conspirators, and the alleged alarm on the other lest there should be an attempt to rescue them in the midst of a hostile crowd. When they had arrived within the court of the Bargello, Romola was allowed to approach Bernardo with his confessor for a moment of farewell. Many eyes were bent on them even in that struggle of an agitated throng, as the aged man, forgetting that his hands were bound with irons, lifted them towards the golden head that was bent towards him, and then, checking that movement, leaned to kiss her. She seized the fettered hands that were hung down again, and kissed them as if they had been sacred things.

"My poor Romola," said Bernardo, in a low voice, "I have only to die, but thou hast to live—and I shall not be there to help thee."

"Yes," said Romola, hurriedly, "you *will* help me—always—because I shall remember you."

She was taken away and conducted up the flight of steps that led to the loggia surrounding the grand old court. She took her place there, determined to look till the moment when her godfather laid his head on the block. Now while the prisoners were allowed a brief interval with their confessor, the spectators were pressing into the court until the crowd became dense around the black scaffold, and the torches fixed in iron rings against the pillars threw a varying startling light at one moment on passionless stone carvings, at another on some pale face agitated with suppressed rage or suppressed grief—the face of one among the many near relatives of the condemned, who were presently to receive their dead and carry them home.

Romola's face looked like a marble image against the dark arch as she stood watching for the moment when her godfather would appear at the foot of the scaffold. He was to suffer first, and Battista Ridolfi, who was by her side, had promised to take her away through a door behind them when she should have seen the last look of the man who alone in all the world had shared her pitying love for her father. And still, in the background of her thought, there was the possibility striving to be a hope, that some rescue might yet come, something that would keep that scaffold unstained by blood.

For a long while there was constant movement, lights flickering, heads swaying to and fro, confused voices within the court, rushing waves

of sound through the entrance from without. It seemed to Romola as if she were in the midst of a storm or a troubled sea, caring nothing about the storm, but only about holding out a signal till the eyes that looked for it could seek it no more.

Suddenly there was stillness, and the very tapers seemed to tremble into quiet. The executioner was ready on the scaffold, and Bernardo del Nero was seen ascending it with a slow firm step. Romola made no visible movement, uttered not even a suppressed sound: she stood more firmly, caring for *his* firmness. She saw him pause, saw the white head kept erect, while he said in a voice distinctly audible,

"It is but a short space of life that my fellow-citizens have taken from me."

She perceived that he was gazing slowly round him as he spoke. She felt that his eyes were resting on her, and that she was stretching out her arms towards him. Then she saw no more till—a long while after as it seemed—a voice said, "My daughter, all is peace now. I can conduct you to your house."

She uncovered her head and saw her godfather's confessor standing by her, in a room where there were other grave men talking in subdued tones.

"I am ready," she said, starting up. "Let us lose no time."

She thought all clinging was at an end for her: all her strength now should be given to escape from a grasp under which she shuddered.

CHAPTER LXI.

D R I F T I N G A W A Y .

On the eighth day from that memorable night Romola was standing on the brink of the Mediterranean, watching the gentle summer pulse of the sea just above what was then the little fishing village of Viareggio.

Again she had fled from Florence, and this time no arresting voice had called her back. Again she wore the grey religious dress; and this time, in her heart-sickness, she did not care that it was a disguise. A new rebellion had risen in her, a new despair. Why should she care about wearing one badge more than another, or about being called by her own name? She despaired of finding any consistent duty belonging to that name. What force was there to create for her that hallowed supreme motive which men call duty, but which can have no inward constraining existence save through some form of believing love? The bonds of all strong affection were snapped. In her marriage, the highest bond of all, she had ceased to see the mystic union which is its own guarantee of indissolubleness, had ceased even to see the obligation of a voluntary pledge: had she not proved that the things to which she had pledged herself were impossible? The impulse to set herself free had risen again

with overmastering force ; yet the freedom could only be an exchange of calamity. There is no compensation for the woman who feels that the chief relation of her life has been no more than a mistake. She has lost her crown. The deepest secret of human blessedness has half whispered itself to her, and then for ever passed her by.

And now Romola's best support under that supreme woman's sorrow had slipped away from her. The vision of any great purpose, any end of existence which could ennoble endurance and exalt the common deeds of a dusty life with divine ardent, was utterly eclipsed for her now by the sense of a confusion in human things which made all effort a mere dragging at tangled threads ; all fellowship, either for resistance or advocacy, mere unfairness and exclusiveness. What, after all, was the man who had represented for her the highest heroism : the heroism not of hard self-contained endurance, but of willing, self-offering love ? What was the cause he was struggling for ? Romola had lost her trust in Savonarola, had lost that fervour of admiration which had made her unmindful of his aberrations, and attentive only to the grand curve of his orbit. And now that her keen feeling for her godfather had thrown her into antagonism with the Frate, she saw all the repulsive and inconsistent details in his teaching with a painful lucidity which exaggerated their proportions. In the bitterness of her disappointment she said that his striving after the renovation of the Church and the world was a striving after a mere name which told no more than the title of a book : a name that had come to mean practically the measures that would strengthen his own position in Florence ; nay, often questionable deeds and words, for the sake of saving his influence from suffering by his own errors. And that political reform which had once made a new interest in her life seemed now to reduce itself to narrow devices for the safety of Florence, in contemptible contradiction with the alternating professions of blind trust in the Divine care.

It was inevitable that she should judge the Frate unfairly on a question of individual suffering, at which *she* looked with the eyes of personal tenderness, and *he* with the eyes of theoretic conviction. In that declaration of his, that the cause of his party was the cause of God's kingdom, she heard only the ring of egoism. Perhaps such words have rarely been uttered without that meaner ring in them ; yet they are the implicit formula of all energetic belief. And if such energetic belief, pursuing a grand and remote end, is often in danger of becoming a demon-worship, in which the votary lets his son and daughter pass through the fire with a readiness that hardly looks like sacrifice ; tender fellow-feeling for the nearest has its danger too, and is apt to be timid and sceptical toward the larger aims without which life cannot rise into religion. In this way poor Romola was being blinded by her tears.

No one who has ever known what it is thus to lose faith in a fellow man whom he has profoundly loved and reverenced, will lightly say that the shock can leave the faith in the Invisible Goodness unshaken. With the sinking of high human trust, the dignity of life sinks too ; we cease to

believe in our own better self, since that also is part of the common nature which is degraded in our thought; and all the finer impulses of the soul are dulled. Romola felt even the springs of her once active pity drying up, and leaving her to barren egoistic complaining. Had not *she* had her sorrows too? And few had cared for her, while she had cared for many. She had done enough; she had striven after the impossible, and was weary of this stifling crowded life. She longed for that repose in mere sensation which she had sometimes dreamed of in the sultry afternoons of her early girlhood, when she had fancied herself floating naïad-like in the waters.

The clear waves seemed to invite her: she wished she could lie down to sleep on them and pass from sleep into death. But Romola could not directly seek death; the fulness of young life in her forbade that. She could only wish that death would come.

At the spot where she had paused there was a deep bend in the shore and a small boat with a sail was moored there. In her longing to glide over the waters that were getting golden with the level sun-rays, she thought of a story which had been one of the things she had loved to dwell on in Boccaccio, when her father fell asleep and she glided from her stool to sit on the floor and read the *Decamerone*. It was the story of that fair Gostanza who in her love-lornness desired to live no longer, but not having the courage to attack her young life, had put herself into a boat and pushed off to sea; then, lying down in the boat, had wrapped her mantle round her head, hoping to be wrecked, so that her fear would be helpless to flee from death. The memory had remained a mere thought in Romola's mind, without budding into any distinct wish; but now, as she paused again in her walking to and fro, she saw gliding black against the red gold another boat with one man in it, making towards the bend where the first and smaller boat was moored. Walking on again, she at length saw the man land, pull his boat ashore, and begin to unlade something from it. He was perhaps the owner of the smaller boat also: he would be going away soon, and her opportunity would be gone with him—her opportunity of buying that smaller boat. She had not yet admitted to herself that she meant to use it, but she felt a sudden eagerness to secure the possibility of using it, which disclosed the half-unconscious growth of a thought into a desire.

"Is that little boat yours also?" she said to the fisherman, who had looked up, a little startled by the tall grey figure, and had made a reverence to this holy Sister wandering thus mysteriously in the evening solitude.

It was his boat; an old one, hardly sea-worthy, yet worth repairing to any man who would buy it. By the blessing of San Antonio, whose chapel was in the village yonder, his fishing had prospered, and he had now a better boat, which had once been Gianni's who died. But he had not yet sold the old one. Romola asked him how much it was worth, and then, while he was busy, thrust the price into a little satchel lying on

the ground and containing the remnant of his dinner. After that, she watched him furling his sail and asked him how he should set it if he wanted to go out to sea, and then, pacing up and down again, waited to see him depart.

The imagination of herself gliding away in that boat on the darkening waters was growing more and more into a longing, as the thought of a cool brook in sultriness becomes a painful thirst. To be freed from the burden of choice when all motive was bruised, to commit herself, sleeping, to destiny which would either bring death or else new necessities that might rouse a new life in her!—it was a thought that beckoned her the more because the soft evening air made her long to rest in the still solitude, instead of going back to the noise and heat of the village.

At last the slow fisherman had gathered up all his moveables and was walking away. Soon the gold was shrinking and getting duskier in sea and sky, and there was no living thing in sight, no sound but the lulling monotony of the lapping waves. In this sea there was no tide that would help to carry her away if she waited for its ebb; but Romola thought the breeze from the land was rising a little. She got into the boat, unfurled the sail, and fastened it as she had learned in that first brief lesson. She saw that it caught the light breeze, and this was all she cared for. Then she loosed the boat from its moorings, and tried to urge it with an oar, till she was far out from the land, till the sea was dark even to the west, and the stars were disclosing themselves like a palpitating life over the wide heavens. Resting at last, she threw back her cowl, and, taking off the kerchief underneath, which confined her hair, she doubled them both under her head for a pillow on one of the boat's ribs. The fair head was still very young and could bear a hard pillow.

And so she lay, with the soft night air breathing on her while she glistened on the waters and watched the deepening quiet of the sky. She was alone now: she had freed herself from all claims, she had freed herself even from that burden of choice which presses with heavier and heavier weight when claims have loosed their guiding hold.

Had she found anything like the dream of her girlhood? No. Memories hung upon her like the weight of broken wings that could never be listed—memories of human sympathy which even in its pains leaves a thirst that the Great Mother has no milk to still. Romola felt orphaned in those wide spaces of sea and sky. She read no message of love for her in that far-off symbolic writing of the heavens, and with a great sob she wished that she might be gliding into death.

She drew the cowl over her head again and covered her face, choosing darkness rather than the light of the stars, which seemed to her like the hard light of eyes that looked at her without seeing her. Presently she felt that she was in the grave, but not resting there: she was touching the hands of the beloved dead beside her, and trying to wake them.

Spiritualism.

THREE years ago an article was published in this Magazine under the title of "Stranger than Fiction," which contained a report of the writer's personal experience of one of Mr. Home's sittings, and which in some quarters has produced the remarkable inference that the CORNHILL MAGAZINE was a ghostly organ, favouring the pretensions of spirit-rappers and others of the same or analogous persuasions. This notion is worth noticing solely because it illustrates the excessive folly with which people are in the habit of arguing on such subjects. A respectable and, in general, credible witness wishes to inform the public that he saw certain very strange sights under circumstances which gave him full opportunities of observation. A Magazine, the object of which is to inform and amuse the public, inserts his account of what he saw and heard, without comment—*ergo*, the persons connected with the management of the magazine must not only believe this particular statement but must also be believers in the truth of the pretensions of the principal performer in the story, and of those of other persons of the same class. In fact, the conclusion is totally false. Strange as it may appear to those who believe whatever they hear, there is such a thing as a power of disbelieving evidence on the bare ground of its improbability, and without reference to the credit of the witness. It is perhaps not unfortunate for the world that it does contain some people who are not absolutely at the mercy of every respectable person who chooses to come and tell them an incredible story. It may also possibly contribute to the general comfort of society that people of this way of thinking do not always feel it necessary to be rude to a person whom they do not believe, and that they content themselves with not believing the story without, on that account, thinking the worse of the narrator. No doubt such conduct is unintelligible to heated partisans, or to those who do not much care what sort of opinions they admit into their heads. Such persons cannot understand the Scribe and the Pharisee who pass by on the other side. If you are not disposed to be a Good Samaritan pouring the oil and wine of submissive credulity into the wounds of their vanity, they would prefer you to be one of those who fall upon them by the wayside, and whom they may denounce as thieves and robbers.

In illustration of this matter we propose to consider in the present paper, what opinion a person of ordinary common sense would form of Spiritualism, a subject to which public attention has just been pointed in a somewhat marked manner by the publication of two or three works on the subject. The most pretentious, and the least satisfactory of these, is Mr. Howitt's *History of the Supernatural*. Mr. Home's *Autobiography*

is, as far as it goes, more important, because it is first-hand testimony; and Mr. Robert Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, published two years ago, is certainly cautious and as moderate as a book can be which is one mass of marvels utterly incredible to the average human mind.

It may be convenient for the purposes of this paper to invert the usual order, and to begin by stating the conclusion which the writer personally draws from a pretty careful perusal of these books and other publications of the same kind. He does not believe a single word of them from one end to the other. The stories which they contain run off his mind like water off a duck's back, and appear to him altogether unworthy of credit.

The case of the spiritualists is that, *à priori*, there is no reason why spirits should not appear, and that there is abundance of specific evidence to show that they do, of the same sort that would be considered decisive on other important occasions, for instance in the administration of justice. It is the object of the books mentioned above to enforce these points. The work of Mr. Howitt is addressed principally to the general, and that of Mr. Owen to the particular, question. Mr. Howitt declares not only that on *à priori* grounds, there is no reason to suppose that spirits will not appear, but that the general inference to be derived from the history of mankind is that they will. He has industriously put together every supernatural history on which he has been able to lay his hands in any part of the world, and from the whole of them, collectively, he infers that the belief in supernatural appearances is justified not by this or that particular occurrence, but by the general and permanent convictions of the human race.

No kind of argument is either more popular than this or less deserving of attention. It is popular because it may always be alleged in favour of any common opinion, true or false. It is always probable that the reasons, whatever they may be, which have led one person to form an opinion, have had the same effect upon others, and hence, unless the mere fact that an opinion is held by A is proof that it is true, the fact that it is held by B, C, D, and so on up to Z, is no proof that it is true. If one person is mistaken a thousand may be, especially if the mistake of the one arises from any cause likely to act on very many. Who supposes that Buddhism is true because, perhaps, 300,000,000 people believe it, and because all their ancestors, for many centuries, have believed it? Even if the consent of a vast number of people had any tendency to prove the truth of the opinion held by them, it would be practically impossible to apply the test to any given instance; for in order to do so, it would be necessary to show that the persons cited as authorities all held identically the same opinion upon the point in question; and how is it possible to show this? What is the specific opinion which Mr. Howitt says has universally obtained with respect to supernatural appearances?

Apart, however, from this, it would be necessary to Mr. Howitt's argument to show, not only that there always have been people who believed in ghosts, but that there was never anybody who after argument disbelieved. It is scepticism, and not faith, which gives its value to a common opinion. Show that nobody ever tried to confute a common opinion, and you prove not that those who held it believed it on good grounds, but that no one can tell what grounds they had for believing it. The belief of hundreds of millions in a fact, of which the evidence has not been properly sifted, has no tendency to prove its truth. Is it any the more likely that there were seven kings of Rome, because for many centuries it was universally believed to be a fact that there were? A great majority of the population of Europe, at the present day, think that spirit-rapping, and all that relates to it, is absurd nonsense. Would Mr. Howitt accept their belief as evidence of the truth of their opinion?

Common opinion can, in practice, be used for testimonial purposes only by those who are willing to discredit their own witness. Mr. Howitt himself would not affirm the truth of the superstitions to which he appeals in support of his own thesis. In classical times, he tells us, people believed in omens, prodigies, oracles, witchcraft, and the like. Does he believe not only in the general inference, which he presses on his readers, but in the specific facts from which the inferences are drawn? Does he believe, for instance, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or in the dreadful feats which Horace ascribes to Canidia? Did she really pull the moon out of the sky? To let in the oracles and keep out Canidia and the Arabian Nights is to blow hot and cold.

For these reasons, it would seem that no weight at all ought to be attached to the strange array of quotations from histories of ancient times and remote places which Mr. Howitt's industry has brought together. All that can be said is, that there always have been ghost stories, and that they have generally been received with an amount of scepticism proportioned to the cultivation of the age.

The real interest of the question, and the gist of the whole discussion, lies in the offer made by men like Mr. Owen, to produce specific evidence of actual occurrences of the kind in question. They say we proffer to you evidence of apparitions and of cases of supernatural agency, such as would be sufficient to convict a man of murder, and we claim that you shall either believe what we say, or give a reason for not believing it. Our space confines us to some general observations, and a few specific illustrations. Neither Mr. Howitt nor Mr. Owen appear to give sufficient weight to the amount of simple lying that there is in the world. Happily, many people find it difficult to believe in downright wilful falsehood. To Mr. Owen, quietly speculating in his own study on these things, there is very probably something so repulsive and disgusting in the notion of a downright lie, that he feels great difficulty in imputing it to any apparently respectable and well-bred person. Still wilful lies are

undoubtedly told, and apart from general considerations on the comparative weight of human testimony on the one side, and improbabilities on the other, some cases may be mentioned in which the facts relied upon by the advocates of spiritualism appear to fall under that category.

A whole chapter of Mr. Howitt's book is devoted to the subject of the Cevenol prophets. His account of the subject is derived principally from M. Peyrat's *Pasteurs du Désert*, an instructive and interesting work. In a few words, the story is that the inhabitants of the Cevennes—a range of mountains lying between Auvergne on the north, and the plain of Languedoc on the south—driven to desperation by the cruelties of Louis XIV. and Bavière, the intendant of the province, broke out into insurrection. They carried on a desperate civil war for two or three years, and were finally subdued by Marshal Villars as much by negotiation as by force. Their principal leaders were Cavallier, a baker's apprentice, and Roland Laporte, a peasant. These are unquestioned historical facts. The miraculous part of the story is, that the Cevenols were animated in their resistance, and were, indeed, enabled to carry it on, principally by the exhortations and miracles of prophets and seers, who foretold future events, and performed various prodigies. One man in particular, Clary by name, was said at a given time and place to have stood unharmed in the midst of a large fire. These stories rest on the authority of a book called *Théâtre Sacré des Cevennes*, published in English under the title of *A Cry from the Desert*, and written by two men, named Fage and Marion, who described themselves as eye-witnesses of the miracles in question. Mr. Howitt is apparently not aware of the fact that other eye-witnesses denied upon oath the truth of their statements, and in particular that Cavallier himself did so in the most unqualified manner, especially as to the miracle of Clary. The documents on the subject are rare, but they may be seen at the British Museum, in a book called *Nouveaux Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire des trois Camisardes, ou l'on voit les Déclarations du Colonel Cavallier*. It was published in London in 1708. This case shows that the most explicit, circumstantial, and direct affirmation of the truth of a fact may be a simple falsehood, and throws considerable doubt on so much of the stories of Mr. Owen and Mr. Howitt as rest on the credit of particular persons who say we saw this or that. They also might be contradicted as well as Fage and Marion, if the proper trouble were taken, and if the eye-witnesses were still alive.

A single illustration shows how we are at the mercy of unknown people. One of Mr. Owen's best stories is as follows:—In October, 1857, a lady, Mrs. R—— (whose name Mr. Owen offers to give if necessary), was living at Ramhurst House, in Kent. The usual ghostly sounds were heard, rustling of silk dresses, knocks, footsteps, and voices at night, &c. About the middle of the month a Miss S—— came to stay at Ramhurst. Miss S—— “had been in the habit of seeing apparitions at times from early childhood.” As she drove up to the house she

saw on the threshold the appearance of two figures, apparently an elderly couple, in an old-fashioned dress. Miss S—— saw the same apparition several times, and on one occasion the ghosts said they had been husband and wife, and were named Children. The husband's Christian name was Richard, and he died in 1753. On one occasion Mrs. R—— as she was coming down to dinner saw and walked through a female figure, over which was written in phosphoric letters, "Dame Children." The name of Children was altogether unknown, but on inquiry in the village it appeared that an old woman of seventy had known an old man fifty years before who had said he had kept the hounds of the Children family. In 1858 Mr. Owen heard this story and inquired into it further, and after much search found papers in the British Museum showing that a Mr. Richard Children settled at Ramhurst in 1718. These papers were in a collection called the Hasted Papers, and as Hasted had written a history of Kent Mr. Owen examined it, and there found, in an account of the parish of Leigh, that Mr. Richard Children of Ramhurst Manor House died in 1753. From all this Mr. Owen argues that Mrs. R—— and Miss S—— must have seen a ghost. In the absence of all information about Miss S——, except that she told this story, it is right to point out that if she happened to see Hasted's *History of Kent* before going on her visit, and looked, as she naturally might, to see what was said of the house to which she was going, she would at once get the opportunity of making up the story about Richard Children's ghost. Is it more likely that a ghost should appear, or that a lady should tell a falsehood, which to many minds might appear a harmless trick? Take out Richard Children and the date, and there is nothing very remarkable in the story.

Apart from questions as to the credit of particular witnesses, it must be added that neither Mr. Owen nor Mr. Howitt write in such a way as to give a very high impression of their accuracy. Mr. Owen has a trick which he ought carefully to unlearn if he wishes to make his statements of the effect of evidence really impartial. The following are instances of it:—A Mdlle. Clairon wrote an autobiography, in which she tells a story of the persecutions she underwent from a deceased lover, who used, amongst other things, to fire muskets at her window. The police, she says, tried to detect the trick, but in vain, and "the fact is attested by the official record on the registers of the police." She also says that various other persons saw what happened. On this, Mr. Owen observes—"The phenomena were observed not by Mdlle. Clairon only, but by numerous other witnesses, including the police officers of Paris. The record of them is still to be found in the archives of that police," &c. So, no doubt, she said; but it does not appear that Mr. Owen saw the archives for himself, or that they are still to be seen; nor does it appear that the other persons mentioned corroborated her story. The whole, therefore, rests on Mdlle. Clairon alone. Mr. Owen constantly repeats this fallacy.

As for Mr. Howitt, he is so set upon his ghosts that he seems to feel

that a ghost gives probability to a story, instead of taking it away. He actually goes so far as to argue in favour of the truth of the claims of modern Egyptian magicians from the magical stories in the *Arabian Nights*, which, he says, represent the state of belief amongst the people. When a man presents himself who is ready to believe in the roc's egg and Aladdin's palace, if any respectable witness will swear to them, there is very little good in arguing. How is anything whatever to be disproved?

After making every fair deduction on the scores of wilful falsehood, inaccuracy, and other analogous grounds, it must in honesty be admitted that a considerable number of the stories told by these gentlemen, especially by or about Mr. Home, do reduce the reader to the question whether he will reject the story simply on account of its inherent improbability. There are many of them which cannot be explained away to any purpose. They must be accepted, or rejected on the broad ground of their inherent incredibility. It may be interesting to mention some of these stories.

In September, 1857, Captain Wheatcroft (the name is given by Mr. Howitt, the initials only by Mr. Owen), of the 6th Dragoon Guards, went to India, leaving his wife at Cambridge. On the night between the 14th and 15th of November she dreamed that she saw her husband looking ill, on which she awoke, and saw his figure standing by her bedside. She assured herself that she was awake by rubbing the sheet, &c., and the figure remained distinctly visible for about a minute. Some time after news came of Captain Wheatcroft's death before Lucknow. Mr. Wilkinson, his solicitor, obtained a certificate of his death from the War Office. It dated his death on the 15th November. His widow declared that there must be a mistake as she saw the ghost on the 14th. Mr. Wilkinson happened to call on a lady who was in the habit of seeing visions, and told her this story as a wonderful thing. The lady said to her husband, "That must be the person I saw the evening we were talking about India, and you drew an elephant with a howdah on his back." She added, that the spirit told her husband he had been killed in India that afternoon. On being questioned as to the date, the lady said that she could not exactly remember it, but that just before the ghost came she had paid a bill for some German vinegar. The receipt was brought, and was dated November 14. In March, 1858, further news arrived to show that Captain Wheatcroft was killed on the 14th, and the War Office subsequently certified to that effect.

In this case the first appearance to the wife may be accounted for as a dream, natural enough under the circumstances, and there is not much in the continuance of the impression on the senses after waking; but if Mr. Wilkinson's account of his interview with the other lady is true, the evidence becomes very strong. That a person who professed to see ghosts should, when she heard of the appearance of one to somebody else, put in a claim to have seen it too, is not the point; but that she should forget the date, fix it by the receipt, and then be confirmed by the receipt, and that that date should turn out to be the true one, the official return being

incorrect, is just the sort of confirmation which would weigh very heavily with a jury in any trial, civil or criminal.

Another of Mr. Owen's stories is more curious, and might have been better attested if it had been investigated at the time. A merchant captain named Clarke told Mr. Owen in 1859, that in 1836 or '37 he had heard the following story from a man named Bruce, "as truthful and straightforward a man as ever I met in all my life." In 1828 Bruce was mate of a trading vessel. He went down into the cabin with the captain to calculate the day's work. When he had done, being surprised at the result of his calculation, he asked the captain what he made it. Getting no answer, he looked up and saw a figure, which he supposed to be the captain's, writing on the captain's slate. He spoke again twice, and the figure, looking up, appeared to be a perfect stranger. Bruce went upon deck and told the captain. After some conversation, they went down and found the slate with these words on it, "Steer to the Nor' West." The captain, suspecting the mate of having written it, made him and every other man on board who could write, write those words on the other side of the slate. The writing was quite different. They then determined to steer as directed, and in a short time fell in with a ship frozen to the ice of an iceberg (not, by the way, a very probable situation for a ship to be in). They took off the passengers. One of them the mate declared to be the man whom he had seen, and when he wrote "Steer to the North-West" on the slate, the handwriting corresponded exactly. The captain of the second ship said that about noon the passenger had fallen into a deep sleep for about an hour, and on waking said, "Captain, we shall be relieved this very day." He added, that he had dreamed he was on board a barque, which he accurately described, and that the barque was coming to their rescue. This case rests on Clarke's account of what Bruce said twenty years before Clarke reported it, about an event which, when Bruce first told the story, was eight or nine years old. Suppose Bruce's account to be corroborated by the production of the slate, by the two captains, the mysterious passenger, the men who had to write their names, and the log-books of the two vessels, and the evidence would be good enough to hang twenty men upon. As it is, the story goes for next to nothing.

The evidence of spirit-rappers, like Mr. Home, is, no doubt, the strongest case. A considerable number of the phenomena to which they testify must unquestionably be allowed to rest on good evidence, whether or not that evidence is to be believed. Take the case of our own contributor. He says, I went to such a place at such a time, and there I saw a table rise up till the top formed a plane inclined at an angle of 45°; "finally the whole structure stands on the extreme tip of a single claw." He also says that he saw Mr. Home rise off the ground to a height of four or five feet, and float about in the air. This does not rest on the evidence of our contributor alone. Dr. Gully, of Malvern, wrote a letter to the *Morning Star*, saying that he was present on the occasion, that the record made in the article was "in every particular correct," and that he and

our contributor "were neither asleep nor intoxicated, nor even excited." As to Mr. Home's moving about in the air, Dr. Gully says, "Only consider that here is a man between ten and eleven stone in weight floating about the room for many minutes in the tomblike silence which prevailed, broken only by his voice coming from different quarters of the room; is it probable, is it possible, that any machinery could be devised, not to speak of its being set up and previously made ready, in a room which was fixed upon as the place of meeting only five minutes before we entered it, capable of carrying such a weight about without the slightest sound of any description?" Here is direct evidence of the most positive kind to plain matters of fact. I saw a table in a certain position; I saw a human body move through the air; I had the opportunity of seeing machinery, &c.; I looked for it, and it was not there. This sort of evidence leaves no escape. It can be disbelieved only on the broad ground of the balance of improbabilities, and it is but a small sample of the amount of evidence tendered by spirit-rappers and their adherents. One consideration as to its force is conclusive. Concede, for the sake of argument, that the statements of our correspondent and Dr. Gully were true, what stronger evidence of their truth could be given?

Here, then, arises in the neatest form the question as to a conflict between evidence and probability. Two credible witnesses affirm that they saw a man float in the air under the circumstances stated. Do you believe it or not? The question must be put and answered by each person for himself. The writer of the present article has no hesitation in saying, No, I do not believe it. To explain and justify this answer, it is necessary to depart from the common form of composition. The reasons for belief are not the same in every case. One man may credit evidence which another person would disbelieve; one may take views as to the nature of belief which another would repudiate. It is therefore impossible to state the reasons for disbelief generally. They must have reference to the particular person disbelieving. Hence, if the question is to be really considered, the author, however unwillingly, must drop the impersonal tone. He must get into the witness-box and cross-examine himself. Q. Pray, sir, who and what are you?—A. It is no matter who or what I am, except that I am what you would call an educated person, and I view the subject merely as one of general curiosity. Q. Do you know anything of Dr. Gully?—A. I have had the pleasure of meeting him, and know him well by reputation. Q. Do you believe him to be a man of honour and veracity?—A. Unquestionably. Q. Do you believe he was present on the occasion to which he refers?—A. Yes. Q. And that he could see what passed, and was sober and unexcited.—A. Yes. Q. Do you believe that he publicly told a wilful lie about it?—A. No. Q. Yet you do not believe his statement?—A. No, I do not. Q. Then, how do you avoid the inference that he lied?—A. By not drawing any inference about it. Q. But are you not bound to draw it?—A. No; I am not sitting on a jury. Q. Suppose you were?—A. That would alter the case

entirely. *Q.* How so?—*A.* Because I should be forced by my oath to give a true verdict according to the evidence. *Q.* Then if you were on a jury, should you believe that Dr. Gully had told a lie?—*A.* In some cases I might have to act as if I thought so, but it would depend on the issue to be tried. Except for the purposes of the trial, my belief that Dr. Gully is a man of honour would be unaffected. *Q.* I do not understand how that can be. Is not a statement either true or false for all purposes whatever?—*A.* No doubt; but it does not follow that we must form the same opinion as to its truth or falsehood for all purposes whatever. I will put some cases.

An action is brought by Mr. Home for libel against some one who uses language which enables Mr. Home to give evidence of the truth of the statement that he floated in the air as alleged. He calls Dr. Gully, who swears to what he wrote. I should disbelieve the evidence and give a verdict for the defendant. It is for the plaintiff to prove his case, and no man's oath to such a fact would satisfy me of its truth.

At the sitting in question, while the room was darkened, a man was murdered. One of the party is charged by the rest with the crime. There is evidence of an *alibi* which, in ordinary cases, I should not trust. In cross-examination the persons present testify to the alleged wonders. This would shake their credit, and I should acquit the prisoner. He is entitled to the benefit of a doubt.

On the day and time of the sitting a murder is committed at York. The prisoner says, "I was then at Mr. Home's sitting in London." On cross-examining the witnesses for the prisoner they all assert that the alleged wonders took place. Here I should believe the *alibi* and acquit the prisoner, for the same reason as in the last case.

Dr. Gully is called as a witness on a trial, civil or criminal. When he is cross-examined to his credit it appears that he made the statements in question. I should not disbelieve him for that reason; for though I do not myself believe the statements to be true, I know that many respectable persons have made such statements.

Q. You think, then, that belief or disbelief is a matter of expediency?—*A.* I do. *Q.* Do you believe the multiplication table on that ground?—*A.* Yes. *Q.* Do you find it expedient to believe that twice two make five when you receive money, and that they make three when you pay bills?—*A.* In the long run I find it expedient to believe the truth, even when the apparent advantage is most strongly the other way. In regard to general rules like the multiplication table the evidence as to what is true is so strong that the consideration of expediency does not make itself sensibly felt, though I think I could show that it exists;* but human testimony as to isolated transactions is so weak that in almost every case the question of consequences has much to do with one's conclusion. *Q.* Viewing the matter as one of expediency, how do you make it out to

* See an Article on "Superstition" in the *Cornhill Magazine* for May, 1862.

be inexpedient that you personally should believe these statements? How would they hurt you if they were true?—*A.* Because they would tend to disturb all the assumptions on which I conduct my ordinary affairs. I always act on the assumption that we do not float in the air, but walk on the earth; that chairs and tables stand still where they are put, and do not climb on sofas, and that if my watch gets into your pocket it is because you put it there. I should like to see my servant tell me, "Please, sir, it was the spirits who broke the china, and it was my abandoned double who got drunk." Besides, in common with all educated men, I have an interest in physical science. That, at all events, has performed solid services. It has explained, and is explaining, the order of the universe. It has not only made life more comfortable, but, which is far more, has ennobled and purified the understanding, and freed it from every sort of degrading superstition. I don't like to be dragged down to the level of the believers in witchcraft and obi-men.

Q. Then you would not believe these things if ten people swore to them?—*A.* No. *Q.* If fifty did?—*A.* No. *Q.* Suppose you saw them yourself?—*A.* No one can answer for his own strength of mind and nerve; but I hope and believe that when the sharpness of the impression had worn off I should cease to think of it, and so, by degrees, come to doubt whether it had happened, and at last to disbelieve it. *Q.* Is there, then, no evidence whatever on which you would believe them?—*A.* Yes. Let them be explained, let them be brought into connection with the ordinary pursuits of life, and become a recognized part of its working apparatus, and then I will believe. If a spiritual telegraph is established which habitually anticipates electricity; if the detective police are replaced by immortal spies; if, in short, the spirits are harnessed to the wheels of life and become part of its recognized machinery, then I shall believe, but not otherwise.

Q. You profess a great respect for science, but I don't understand where you get your science if you are prepared to discredit your senses when they testify to anything unusual. Surely science is founded on the evidence of the senses?—*A.* My respect for science is founded on experience of its truth, and, to use a common phrase, of its fruitfulness. In deference to an established scientific rule I am quite ready to distrust my senses, if by that you mean the natural inferences from my senses. For instance, I should naturally infer from them that the sun moved and the earth stood still, but I believe the reverse. My faith in the general proposition is always stronger than my faith in propositions as to specific facts, so is that of every reasonable creature, as appears from this, that you cannot comprehend any specific proposition without some generality to which it is referred. The proposition "that is a tree" is unmeaning, unless you have a general notion corresponding to the word tree. How you get your general notions in the first instance is, perhaps, the most obscure of all metaphysical questions; but when you have got them they deserve far more authority than any assertion as to an isolated fact. If you suppose

them to be derived from experience, the basis of experience on which they rest is wider than that on which any specific proposition rests. If they are derived from the constitution of the mind itself, the evidence for them is higher in kind. *Q.* Yet all great scientific discoveries have been based on the observation of specific facts. What do you say to Franklin and the lightning, or Galvani and the frog's leg? Would you have denied that the frog's leg jerked?—*A.* No doubt the examination of specific facts is the first step towards discovery, and I freely admit that I think the spirit-rappers have made out a case for scientific inquiry. I have been considering how I and others like me—the unscientific world—ought to believe in the meantime. As to the frog's leg, if anything depended on it I might very probably have disbelieved it wrongly, but that does not show that I should have been wrong in disbelieving. *Q.* Why not?—*A.* Because by the application of the same rule I should generally have been right, and every rule leads you wrong at times. *Q.* You may, then, be wrong on this?—*A.* No doubt; but till spiritualism is as much recognized as galvanism I am not shown to be so. *Q.* Then your state of mind is one of provisional disbelief, but that provisional disbelief goes so far that you would not give it up even in obedience to your own senses?—*A.* Just so. I do not say that nobody ever will or can have good grounds to believe in these things, but I have not; and I would add that, if it is true that 3,000,000 people in America believe in them, I think it likely that 2,999,900 believe unwisely. Perhaps 100 may have earned a *prima facie* right to believe. I don't admit that their opinion is true, but only that they may be able to put it on grounds which I could not refute if they were stated to me. *Q.* Your view would have some curious consequences in practice. What do you say that ordinary people ought to think on hearing that a man at York can speak to a man in London in a second?—*A.* Disbelieve it. *Q.* Yet it is true.—*A.* Yes; but as you put it it is not put in a credible form. You state only a bare result. If you stated in substance the means by which the result is obtained, you would make your statement probable, and the statement might then be provisionally believed. *Q.* Then you say the King of Siam was right in not believing in ice?—*A.* Yes; but the Dutch ambassador was a foolish fellow for not putting a porous earthen vessel, with a wet cloth round it, in a draught of air, and showing the king the frozen surface in the morning. If he had done so, and had pointed out to the king the fact that there were differences of temperature in his own country, &c., he might have put him in the wrong in not believing. Surely he would have been right in refusing, on the ambassador's authority, to believe in dragons.

Q. Do you believe in Julius Cæsar?—*A.* Yes. *Q.* Why?—*A.* Not on the strength of the veracity of any particular person, but because Julius Cæsar's life fits in with, and forms part of, a long continuous history, which is incidentally corroborated by laws, institutions, languages, &c., still existing and open to inspection. If some one spelt out an inscription on a pyramid saying that ten thousand years ago such a man reigned, and

fought battles, and made laws in the valley of the Nile, I should neither believe nor disbelieve it. The presumption that the fact was so would be the lightest possible. It would be little more than a guess. So if a single man told me anything about the state of affairs in the interior of Madagascar, I should pay little attention to what he said, especially if the story was an odd one.

Q. But what would you say to the Christian miracles? Does not the whole future of Christianity rest on the veracity of certain witnesses to isolated and transient facts?—A. I should be very sorry to think so; for if it did I am quite sure it would come to the ground. How it may have been with the first believers is another question, but in the present day the religion carries the miracles, and not the miracles the religion. People are Christians because the Christian account of life in general, and of the relations between God and man, appears to them, on the whole, the one which best suits the facts of life, and is thus, on the whole, the most probable. This renders it probable that God may have seen fit to set the system going by miraculous interpositions. Q. Then you think that it is possible that two thousand years hence people may believe in Joe Smith as an inspired prophet?—A. If Mormonism becomes the religion of the world, I have no doubt they will, but not otherwise; and I do not think that event very probable at present. Do you, or can any man, suppose that if the Christian religion were a mass of wickedness, if it enjoined impurity, dishonesty, and falsehood, the dead weight of the evidence would force mankind to believe it?

Q. Your general conclusion appears to be that the probability of an assertion, all things considered, is the great reason for believing it or not, and that a story *prima facie* improbable ought not to be believed in general till some explanation is offered which brings it into harmony with the common course of events?—A. Yes. Q. You admit the fact that Mr. Home floated in the air to be sufficiently well attested to let in explanations, so that you would believe it if it were put into any assignable relation with a known agent, such as electricity or galvanism?—A. Yes. Give a reasonable explanation, and I should admit it instantly. Q. Why is not the theory that a spirit or spirits carried him a reasonable explanation?—A. Because, apart from these alleged facts, the truth of which is in dispute, there is no evidence that there are such things as spirits. Q. Do you not believe in the human soul?—A. Yes. Q. Then is not every instance in which a nurse carries a child about the room as much a case of a spirit carrying a body as Mr. Home's elevation could be?—A. No doubt. Q. Then why should not the spirits carry Mr. Home?—A. Because conclusions cannot carry premisses. Our notions about spirits are derived entirely from observations on matter,—matter is the hidden external cause to which we refer our sensations, and mind or spirit the hidden something which receives or perceives those sensations; but I know of no evidence, except the very stories in dispute, to show that there are things called ghosts flying about in the air; and, allowing

these stories to be true, they appear to me insufficient to prove it. Believers in ghosts affect to derive their belief from experience. In truth their belief is antecedent to their experience. They begin by believing in shadowy things in human shape, which they call spirits, and then, when they hear rapping, they say it must be a spirit that made it. In just the same way the pagans believed that there was a god called Apollo who presided over prophecies and oracles, and if any one doubted Apollo's existence they appealed to the prophecies and oracles to prove it. *Q.* Then do I understand you to say that you do not believe in a future state at all?—*A.* I think, on the contrary, that that belief is the most reasonable and most important of all human beliefs—as reasonable and important as a belief in a God. It is, however, a formless belief. That in some way or other conscious existence will continue after death, I firmly believe; but the conditions of it are matter of conjecture. We are altogether ignorant on the subject. We have no more reason to believe that a man on dying turns into what you call a spirit—that is, a thing like his former self, only thinner—than that he turns into a haystack. *Q.* Surely there are analogies which might lead to such a conclusion. There is the analogy of birth, there is also the chrysalis and the butterfly, and other things of the same kind?—*A.* If you positively will have some food for your imagination, that is as good as any other; only do not call a conjecture proof, and do not suppose that your conjecture is proved by a fact to which your conjecture gives form. You see these raps and table-turnings in the light of your previous theory, and jump at the conclusion which you wished to establish. If these things are to be treated as scientific proof of a future state, you must begin by discarding all your existing notions on the subject, and making your mind *tabula rasa* with respect to it. I fancy if you did you would look with less satisfaction both on the evidence and on the conclusion to which it points. *Q.* How so?—*A.* Because, assuming your stories to be true, and assuming them to furnish the grounds on which, as Mr. Howitt maintains from one end of his book to the other, atheism and materialism are to be rejected, you set up something instead which is, to my mind, far more dreary and repulsive than blank unbelief. Men, when they die, become, it appears, miserable things endowed with no one property worth having except the power of flying about like gnats. They are so stupid, that though they can go where they please, and do in some respects what they like, they never hit even upon the clumsy plan of the raps and the alphabet till a Yankee Quaker suggested it. This notable difficulty prevented them from communicating with the world for some centuries, and even now restrains their communications to a few people, most of whom are sickly or enthusiastic. Having arrived at the great discovery, they have nothing whatever to say which it is worth any human creature's while to learn. Mr. Home or his editor, indeed, expects "results in the highest style of sanctitude;" and to judge both from that particular phrase and also from general experience, they would be conveyed in the style of English which, in this lower sphere, is consecrated to

the Eureka shirts and the Idoneous trowsers. They have not even the poor ingenuity which would enable them to give proofs of the fact of their existence. When they are asked to tell something which would otherwise remain secret, they say no, we will tell what we choose. When they are called upon to show themselves to sceptics, or to stand forth in a tangible, permanent form, they have always an excuse. The eye of faith is necessary to discern them, or their spectators would be frightened if they did too much. They have had the awful experience of passing from one world to another, and they can tell us nothing about the world to which they have been removed. I once asked a friend who had had much to do with them if he could tell me anything about their habits and ways of life; had they professions, had they families, had they politics, had they literature? how did they pass their time, how did they employ their thoughts? Well, he answered, all I can say is, that one of them told me that they had no currency. This is the next world which you are trying to prove; these are our future prospects. It is dreary to believe that what we see and hear, and weigh and measure, is all that we have to look to. It is melancholy to think that when a man dies he is done with for ever; but at all events those who hold this belief do believe something solid. As far as they go their feet are on a rock. Whether death ends all or not, we can see, and hear, and feel, and count, and I believe that we can do more; that we can look forward to a future life, and look up to a greater Being than ourselves, and that we are entitled to do this on sound and reasonable grounds, such as we should act upon in other matters. But when, for these reasonable grounds, you substitute what you call your evidence; when you put aside the arguments of some of the greatest and wisest of our race and substitute for them the idiots who rap to those who are idle enough to listen—Mr. Home floating about the ceiling, with the ghosts holding up his coat-tails, tables climbing on to ottomans, and arm-chairs cracking their joints at their masters—I feel irresistibly impelled to say that, even if true, the whole affair is at most a witches' sabbath—that my only hope about it is that the proprietor of such exhibitions may soon claim his own, and that I, for one, in the meantime, shall simply dismiss from my mind the whole subject as a mass of rubbish which may be sifted by men who have a turn for picking stray valuables out of dust-bins, but is undeserving of the attention of any one who has any other way of employing his time.

Sibyl's Disappointment.

THE gentlemen were still lingering over their wine or their conversation in the dining-room below, but the ladies had flocked upstairs into the little drawing-room, and were clustered over the ottoman and cushioned seats, which furnished the deep bay-window looking through the thick summer leafage of the trees in the Close towards the minster. The hour was drawing on towards sunset, the sunset of a rich August evening; and the crimson light that suffused the cloud-flakes of the sky reflected a soft roseate blush on all faces. These faces were five, two matronly, three youthful. Lady Anne Vernon, the dean's wife, and her widowed sister, Lady Mary Rivers, were the matrons; the maidens were their children, Julia and Isabel Vernon, and Sibyl Rivers.

Julia and Isabel Vernon were fine young women of four and five and twenty, well bred and well educated, but not dowered with the fatal gift of beauty; Sibyl Rivers was a spoilt child, lovely as a May morning, sweet as violets, fresh as dew; all manner of things fair and fragrant rose to the mind to compare with her.

The ladies' after-dinner talk was drowsy at the beginning, as such talk commonly is, but it brightened into vivacity by and by, over last night's race ball, where Sibyl had made her *début*, and had achieved without effort that intoxicating triumph and success which are all the more delicious from being wholly unanticipated.

"Yes, aunt Mary, Sir John Needham said, and Mr. Digby Stuart, whose word is law, solemnly agreed with him, that your Sibyl was the very prettiest three-year-old that had come out in Hillminster since Lady Raymond's year," said Julia Vernon, who was good-natured, and had no moral scruples about making Sibyl vain.

"If only this dear little head be not turned!" whispered Lady Mary, shaking her own as she stroked her daughter's glossy hair. The possessor of the dear little head in question shook it in reply, looking rosily delighted; but just in the crisis of her happy blush she caught her cousin Isabel watching her with cold, scornful eyes, and shuddered as old wives say we shudder when some foot treads on the place of our grave that is to be.

'Twas so strange, so very strange, she thought, this dread and repugnance she could not help feeling for Isabel; she remembered no sensation like it save one thrilling moment of terror in Wales, when she trod upon a snake, saw it rear its baleful head and hiss at her, then wriggle away through the tall grass, which stirred in its tops as the wind stirs it when it is low; and nestling lower amongst the cushions of the ottoman, she turned half



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away to avoid her cousin's gaze, and into the full light of the setting sun which wrapt her from head to foot in its warm glow.

"When you invited aunt Mary and Sibyl out of their seclusion in Wales to enjoy the modest gaieties of Hillminster, you did not think you were introducing so dangerous a rival amongst the well-known belles of your own town and county, did you, mamma?" went on Julia, appealing to Lady Anne with mock seriousness. "But you found out your mistake last night, when you saw how Sibyl's grace and newness piqued the jaded admiration of the men, while your own girls endured even more than their usual neglect. I always felt that mamma was deficient in the first qualifications of a chaperone, aunt Mary, and we suffer for it."

"My dear Ju!" remonstrated her mother, but Lady Mary smiled kindly on her outspoken niece.

She saw a vista opening out from that crowded whirl where her dear little Sibyl shone brightest and fairest, ending in a good husband and a happy home such as her own married life had never known. For Lady Mary had made a runaway match with a handsome Irish subaltern, and she had been reaping the consequences ever since in penury and neglect. Lieutenant Rivers died when Sibyl was about ten years old; and since that event, which nobody but his ill-used wife deplored, she had hidden herself in Wales, teaching her child herself, and doing her best to avoid those errors in the training of her darling which had been the source of her own long trials and troubles.

Thus far Sibyl had answered well to her loving care. She was not by any means a perfect character, for pride was rank in her; her feelings were impetuous, her passions strong, and her will weak. But she had no small jealousies, no irksome vanities.

The dean had taken to her with a spontaneous kindness, Lady Anne Vernon caressed her, and her cousin Julia treated her with patient indulgence. Only Isabel stood coldly aloof. At first sight Sibyl had shrunk from her with a gesture of shuddering repulsion that was utterly inexplicable; for Isabel was prepared to give her as warm a welcome as the rest. She saw the expression of frightened antipathy, and was dismayed even more than she was bewildered. She could not interpret it, but neither could she forgive it. She laid up the remembrance secretly in her heart, unwitting yet of the soil fertile for evil in which she planted it; but it germinated there, and in due season brought forth leaf and bud, blossom and bitter poison-fruit, as all indulged hate and anger must unless God in His mercy give us grace and strength to pluck up the deadly growth by its roots.

Lady Anne Vernon had an evening party after the dinner, and as the rosy sunset yielded to twilight, the group ensconced in the pleasant window dropt off one by one to adjourn presently to the great drawing-room, where the coming guests were to be received. Some few arrived before the gentlemen made their appearance, the only noticeable person amongst them being old Sir Jasper Raymond's young wife.

Lady Raymond was the most popular woman in Hillminster. She had been popular as a girl, lovely and penniless, but she was even more popular now. She had had suitors galore, but the tale went, that with genuine feminine perversity she had set her heart on almost the only man of her acquaintance who was indifferent to her; which tale was not and could not be precisely correct, because no one save herself knew the true story of her love and her griefs, for the simple reason that she had never told it. But all the world was clear on one point—there had been *something* serious between her and Mr. Digby Stuart, of Alverston Priory, which had ended in *nothing*, and after an interval of a few months, her marriage at Nice with Sir Jasper Raymond was announced to the general confusion, surprise, and indignation of Hillminster. Why had she thrown herself away on a man of seventy? It was wicked, unnatural, monstrous! The men could not forgive the cruel sacrifice; the women, except a few, could not understand it.

Mr. Digby Stuart was still her friend, and her husband's friend, but gossip had never meddled indiscreetly with such honourable names. He was in the dining-room of the deanery now, and soon after nine had struck from the minster tower, he came in with the rest of the gentlemen, made his cordial greeting to Lady Raymond as to others of the evening guests, and the shrewdest observer or the most idly malicious could have found no whisper of doubt to circulate over the manner of their meeting. They were two who, if they could not have met thus innocently and without pain, would have parted to the uttermost ends of the earth that they might never meet at all.

Mr. Digby Stuart was a fine-looking person, distinguished in bearing, and serious in countenance, but with some play of sarcasm about his mouth, and a kindly penetration in his steady grey eyes. There was a mystery about him that he did not marry, being past thirty, the head of an old family, and in possession of a good estate. Several romances explanatory of the riddle had been coined for him, the most popular of which was that he had been a changeling at his birth, and that only on condition of his leading a single life, and leaving the property at his death to the lawful heirs thereof, was he suffered to continue now in undisturbed enjoyment of it. This grotesque story was as far wide of the truth as it well could be; but it served the purposes of conversation now and then, and there were perhaps one or two persons who even believed it.

Twelve o'clock had struck some time before the last carriage rolled away from the deanery door on this memorable night, from which dates the beginning of that sorry jest played out in cruel earnest, which I am about to narrate. But when are the eyes of seventeen drowsy? Sibyl Rivers was as wakeful as at the beginning of the evening; and though her mother gently admonished her that she had better come to bed, she must needs adjourn for five minutes' talk to her cousins' room. The five minutes lengthened out to half an hour, during which Isabel Vernon

found or invented occasion to make so many cold, disenchanting remarks, that the impression of pleasantness the evening had left on Sibyl's mind was quite rubbed off thereby.

"Mr. Digby Stuart says you are a pretty child," was one of these remarks. "He asked how old you were, and was surprised to hear you were more than fifteen. It is time you dropped your baby airs, though they suit your dimples very well. Still affectation of naturalness is as much affectation as any other grace you might choose to put on, and it looks silly when girls are grown up to women."

Sibyl pouted like six years old; she paid no heed to the latter clause of her cousin's speech, but replied to the former part with visible pique. "Mr. Digby Stuart did not talk to me as if I were a child," said she.

"No? I saw you listening to him, as if his commonplaces were pearls of wisdom dropped from the lips of a god."

"Isabel! He was only inviting mamma to go over to luncheon at Alverston to-morrow, and to take me. She knew the priory long ago in his father's time, and he wants to show her the improvements. He is very kind, and I was pleased to think of the excursion."

"Well, don't be *too* pleased, and don't run away with any delusion that he is *too* kind; for it is his way to be kind to everybody. How exquisite Lady Raymond was to-night, Julia!"

"Perfect—she always is."

Sibyl stood smothering her indignation for a minute or two while the sisters discussed Lady Raymond's dress in detail, and then saying, as by an irresistible impulse, "Oh, Isabel, how you hate me!" turned to leave the room. Julia looked up startled and interrogative, but Isabel only laughed.

"You silly child, as if I could hate anything like *you*!" sneered she; throwing into the *you* as much significance of scorn as the monosyllable accentuated by her bitter lips could convey.

Sibyl felt at once ashamed of her impetuous speech, and with hot tears in her eyes and a passionate red on her cheek, she sobbed good-night, and rushed away to her mother. Come into that quiet, kindly presence, her first words were again, "How cousin Isabel hates me!"

"My darling!" exclaimed Lady Mary, in a tone of deprecation, "you must not give way to such fancies. Why should your cousin Isabel hate you?"

"I don't know, but I am sure she does!" was the emphatic reply.

"Hush, hush, Sibyl! Say your prayers, my child, and ask God to keep you loving and true. *Hate*, darling,—you don't know what *hate* means."

Alverston Priory was about six miles up the river from Hillminster, and though not important enough to be a show-place, it was still one of the best and handsomest houses in that part of the county—a house, as

the neighbourhood agreed, that wanted only a mistress to make it perfection.

Lady Mary Rivers and Sibyl drove thither the next day, escorted by Lieutenant George Lansmere, a nephew of Lady Mary's, the second son of her eldest brother, the present earl. George Lansmere was just two-and-twenty, and held a commission in the cavalry regiment then stationed at Hillminster. It was very pleasant for the young officer in country-quarters to have a family of hospitable kinsfolk at the deanery. His cousins, Julia and Isabel, made much of him, and he submitted for some months to the flattering process with serene masculine assurance that such attentions were his due; but when Sibyl Rivers appeared on the scene he fell straightway into captivity to her bright eyes, and lost all thought and consideration for himself. He was genuinely and heartily in love, and to sit opposite the beaming face of his divinity, six miles out to Alverston and six miles home again to Hillminster, was, in the present state of his feelings, a paradisaical delight. He was not a young man to set the world on fire, but he was honest and honourable; and Lady Mary Rivers, whose thoughts day and night rested in hopeful contemplation of her daughter's future, was by no means reluctant to encourage his tolerably evident pretensions.

By what mesmeric fatality is it that one man wins love unsought, possibly undesired, while another may wear himself out in devoted pains-taking efforts to gain the faintest response to his passion and not succeed? From the first hour of Sibyl Rivers meeting with Mr. Digby Stuart, her fancy had been attracted; her thoughts insensibly followed it, and when George Lansmere began his wooing her heart was gone. Neither coquette nor flirt was Sibyl; she reflected never, she only *felt*; and when George was most eager and assiduous she repaid him with gentle smiles and sweet kindness to compensate for her real indifference, and thus misled him perhaps further than the most elaborate wiles could have done.

On this day of her visit to Alverston Priory she was the same simple, childlike creature she had always been; a miracle of ignorance and unworldliness, with consciousness slowly awakening, and womanly instinct awakening with it, but utterly removed from speculation on possibilities or consequences. She was glad to be there; five minutes of listening to Mr. Digby Stuart's conversation with her mother, five minutes of slow sauntering by his side through the conservatory where he enriched her with a sprig of geranium, were sweeter in the passing and dearer in the remembrance than the longest and most joyous holidays of her past life.

It is hard work to amuse a preoccupied mind; and George Lansmere on the homeward drive was troubled twice or thrice with an intrusive suspicion that Sibyl was rather absent, but it never entered into his heart to conceive that she could be dreaming about that very grave and proud personage, the master of Alverston Priory. The dashing lieutenant of hussars would have felt small dread of such a rival, even had his imagination directed him to look out for one in that quarter; and when Sibyl

announced to Lady Anne Vernon, on reaching the deanery, that they had had "a most charming day!" perhaps he may be excused for the pleasing delusion that his own presence had contributed materially to its delightfulness.

The first to detect poor Sibyl's secret was Lady Raymond, who, with the inexplicable freemasonry of women who love, read its subtle signs with deepest dismay. She tried to save the child by hints and warnings, and pretty parables involving much literal truth personal to herself; but the only effect of these attempts was to make Sibyl shy of her; and she had not the courage, even had she the right, to speak openly. For a moment, a little moment and no more, she watched Mr. Digby Stuart with a jealous regard, but in his manner to Sibyl there was nothing more than in his manner to other girls; and whatever food for her dreams she had was evolved purely out of her own fervent fancy. If it be a reproach to a woman to love unsought, and the popular voice has decided that it is, then had Sibyl Rivers incurred it heavily.

With Lady Raymond her pitiful secret was safe, but it soon passed into the possession of her cousin Isabel Vernon, whose eyes were quickened to all opportunities of inflicting a quiet stab on the tender soul that instinctively distrusted her. She made the discovery in this wise:—One morning about midway the month of September, Mr. Digby Stuart rode over to the deanery to confer with the dean on some matter of public business. The ladies upstairs in the little drawing-room heard of his arrival, and Lady Anne Vernon sent down a message to the library bidding him stay to luncheon. An answer was returned that he was sorry, but being in some haste he must despatch his business and go. When she heard this Sibyl vanished from her nest amidst the cushions of the ottoman, and a few minutes afterwards Isabel silently followed her. She had seen Sibyl's breast rise and fall, her colour glow and fade during the passage of the messages to and fro between drawing-room and library, and a shrewd suspicion born of these emotional changes sprang into sudden and full vitality in her brain. "She is in love with Mr. Digby Stuart! Oh, the vain little Quixotic fool! She might as wisely cry for the moon at once!" thought she, and a mingling of something not unlike pity shot through her scorn; for Isabel's hate was not yet grown to that height which triumphs in the great calamity of its object, and much less was it grown to that height which expends itself in procuring such calamity.

Sibyl had betaken herself to her mother's room, whence, from the window in the high Gothic gable, she could see Mr. Digby Stuart ride through the Close, and then, over the tops of the houses in the precentor's court, watch him again if by chance he were returning at once to Alverston direct by the road; watch him a mile on his way until man and horse diminished to a mere speck in the distance. Isabel assured herself from her own window that he went that way; and then, passing through the pretty dressing-room that served Lady Mary Rivers as boudoir, she cautiously put aside the portière that separated it from the bedroom adjoining,

and came upon Sibyl unawares—upon Sibyl lost in sweet reverie, leaning her forehead against the glass, straining her eyes after the fast diminishing figure on the white high road, and deaf and blind to everything outside the sphere of her own thoughts.

Isabel stood for a full minute hushed and observant—time enough to repent, time enough to steal away, time enough to save her own soul from the first active step into a temptation that was to beguile her whither she would have shrunk from imagining even now; but the demon was strong in her at that instant, and stepping over the thick carpet with noiseless tread, she laid a hand on Sibyl's shoulder and whispered, with a laugh which made no pretence of masking her contempt, “I'm sure Mr. Digby Stuart would feel immensely flattered if he knew who takes such a tender interest in his comings and goings.” Sibyl sprang back with an inarticulate sound between a cry and a sob, her visage blanched for a moment, then dyed scarlet with guilty blushes. She did not utter a word; and Isabel, eyeing her with a steady, sarcastic penetration, went on: “So this is the clue to your fits of pretty abstraction! I wish you joy of your love! Don't let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on your damask cheek; don't pine away in green and yellow melancholy, but let yourself go, let your hidden passion reveal itself. Men are mostly vain. If Mr. Digby Stuart were told who lavishes on him such deep devotion, his heart, though proverbially tough as bend leather, would surely yield.”

“Isabel!” gasped Sibyl, in a tone and with a gesture which were of themselves an ample confession; and in that light her cousin understood, accepted, and responded to them.

“You have made me your confidante against your will,” said she. “I don't covet the burden of sentimental secrets, but I suppose I must keep yours for the credit's sake of our sex. I declare I am very sorry for you, cousin Sibyl; for to speak the honest truth I believe you have no more chance of winning a return to your feelings than I have of becoming Empress of China. If Mr. Digby Stuart had been inclined to marry, he would not have let Lady Raymond slip through his fingers; and compare Lady Raymond with yourself. How came you ever to indulge in such a cruel delusion as that you could rival *her*? ”

“I don't know; I don't know,” muttered Sibyl, her lips parched, her eyes fixed, her heart in her bosom growing colder and heavier at every word, until it was cold and heavy as clay.

“Have you told aunt Mary?”

“No;” and Sibyl turned away from her questioner to hide the passion of tears she could no longer repress.

“If you do not wish all the world to know, you must exercise self-control; you must be on your guard,” said Isabel, after a short pause. “There is nothing that lays a girl more open to ridicule than the imputation that she has fallen in love with a man who has shown her no preference; and I am sure Mr. Digby Stuart has shown *you* none.

Hush! this is like a baby! Don't let us have all the gossips in Hillminster set a-chatter! I'll lock the door, and then you can cry your cry out; but I hope nobody will come."

Nobody did come, and Sibyl's agony had its way. Isabel brought her some sal volatile and water to drink, and stood over her putting in words of wisdom and counsel at every lull in the storm; and when it was spent bathed her eyes, smoothed her hair, dressed her for a walk round the Close, tied a veil under her chin, and carried her off finally to evening prayers at the minster, without exciting a word of remark, so matter-of-fact and quiet were her manœuvres. Sibyl felt very humble and grateful now, in spite of her distrust. The reaction after her excitement left her depressed, shame-stricken, and trembling. Till to-day her secret had been the glory of her youth—now it was its bitterest blot. She could never have imagined the tortures that she felt because of it. Isabel had put it before her in its ugliest light. "If you betray me I shall die!" was her often reiterated moan. "If you betray me I shall die!"

Isabel experienced no pain at seeing her suffer; she was drifting before the evil impulses to which she had yielded at the beginning, and her heart, without preconcerting plans to harm the child, readily adopted the opportunities that circumstances presented. Had Sibyl been bolder, or less ingenuous, she would have stubbornly denied the charge, but it was now fully admitted, and she lay at her cousin's mercy. It seemed to her just then that though Isabel spoke satirically she was practically kind. "What should I do without you?" sighed she as they returned homewards across the Close. "Oh, what should I do without you?"

"It appears to me that you would still rather have kept your secret to yourself," was Isabel's response.

"Oh, yes! It did not make me wretched or afraid; it was easier to bear when no one knew it. Isabel, if you betray me I shall die!" That became Sibyl's one idea now—*concealment*. The unveiling of her love had profaned it, made it an absurdity, a mockery—something to be utterly, profoundly, and for ever ashamed of. *He* would despise it—despise her for giving it; so Isabel had told her, and Isabel knew how the world and the men of the world spoke of such unsought love. Henceforward Isabel must be her screen, her safety, her adviser; and if Isabel betrayed her she should die!

There was a dinner-party at the deanery that evening, consisting chiefly of the clergy and their wives, but George Lansmere was coming, and the dean had added Mr. Digby Stuart to the number of guests by an invitation given that morning and accepted conditionally. "It is not certain that he will be able to come," said the dean, only mentioning his impromptu invitation to Lady Anne when they assembled in the drawing-room before dinner. "It is not certain that he will be able to come, but I want him to meet Danvers—they were both Christchurch men, and of the same year." Danvers—the Reverend Canon Danvers—was the canon

newly come into residence, and also newly come into office; a stranger to Hillminster, but not to the diocese; a widower with two boys, and considerable private means independent of the emoluments of his position —a great acquisition in every way to the society of a cathedral town.

Sibyl heard the dean's announcement with a shudder; she turned hot, then cold, then glanced timidly towards Isabel, who was looking away from her, and making conversation with her sister over a new song. Presently the company began to arrive, George Lansmere as usual being the earliest. The young officer had not made satisfactory progress with Sibyl since the day of the drive to Alverston, and was sometimes almost like to be disheartened over his prospects. She was very uncertain; one day sweet and summery, the next, shy, impatient, or repellent. He had opened his mind to Lady Mary, who had exhorted him to have patience, and had privately lectured Sibyl on her capriciousness, and at this point they continued stationary; George's reflection being—"I don't think she cares for me, she has a fancy for some one else;" and her mother's equally grave and anxious, "I cannot understand why Sibyl does not take to George, unless she has conceived a secret attachment to some other person."

Mr. Digby Stuart did come, but not until he had been waited for ten minutes, and, while apologizing to Lady Anne Vernon for his tardiness, he continued to hold in his hand a spray of beautiful white flowers, very rare and choice, and of exquisite perfume, which he presently offered to Sibyl.

"It is the first bloom," said he. "You wished to see it in flower, if you recollect; and I promised you the earliest branch that came out in perfection." Sibyl blushed, and accepted it with a shy eagerness which escaped notice then, but which was pitifully remembered later; and in spite of all the foregone miseries and humiliations of the day, she felt inexpressibly happy until she caught Isabel watching her with cold eyes of scorn. "Delirious little fool!" Isabel thought, and her glance expressed her thought. She hated Sibyl vehemently, actively, at that instant, for her childish elation; and Sibyl, shrinking within herself again under her freezing contempt, felt all her temporarily vanished distrust return.

As luck or ill-luck would have it, Sibyl's place at dinner was between Mr. Digby Stuart and the new canon, and Isabel's place was opposite, between George Lansmere and a fat old married rector, very loquacious and fond of his jest. The natural consequences ensued. When the ladies returned to the drawing-room, Sibyl was pleasantly excited, and Isabel was dull, tired, and cross. Then again, in the drawing-room, Sibyl's gift, which her mother tenderly insisted on fixing in her hair, became a nucleus of conversation which ranged away to Alverston itself, coming round ever and again to that spray of white blossoms. "What a fuss about a flower!" said Isabel; "it was to be seen at Kew three years ago." She demolished the novelty of the flower; but she suggested to one or two commonplace minds then present that she was jealous of the distinction Mr. Digby Stuart had conferred on her pretty cousin.

That night, when the guests dispersed, Sibyl went straight to her mother's room. She would have given much to have her secret all to herself again; for she was afraid of Isabel. She took the white flower from her hair, and put it into a glass of water, first touching the sweet blossoms tenderly with her lips; a happy gleam passed over her face as she indulged in this caress, but it soon vanished, and the weary sadness that succeeded it was very pathetic. She knelt so long at her prayers that Lady Mary, at ease in her mind, tired and comfortable, fell fast asleep on her pillow, and only awoke in the dead of the night to hear Sibyl shuddering and sobbing in her dreams, and uttering broken words of piteous entreaty, the only sense of which to her mother's ears was—"If you betray me, I shall die; oh, Isabel, if you betray me, I shall die!" Lady Mary closed no eye again until Sibyl had been roused from her nightmare of dread, and had poured the story of her love and her grief into her mother's breast.

The following morning when Isabel met her aunt, she "perceived at once that her interference with Sibyl was known and the manner of it strongly disapproved. She expected that Lady Mary would speak to her on the subject, but she did not, and then Isabel understood that it was to be left undiscussed. Sibyl was very quiet and subdued all day, and in the evening Lady Mary began to talk about carrying her off to the seaside for a week or two before the cold autumnal winds began to blow—Sibyl was so fond of the sea. Isabel listened with a silent, expressive sneer, but Julia good-humouredly expostulated, saying that Lady Mary must not keep her cousin away from the October ball.

"I don't care for the October ball," sighed Sibyl, who would have done better not to have spoken just then.

"Eh, what?" cried the dean. "Not care for the October ball—the best ball of the year! Lady Mary, you must look after your missykin, who expresses such unnatural sentiments, or the next news will be that she has fallen in love at cross-purposes like the heroine in a novel!"

Sibyl grew scarlet, others looked confused too, and an awkward silence ensued, which was not broken until somebody proposed music. The rest of the evening passed off without incident.

Of course, as soon as they were in private Lady Anne Vernon asked explanation of her sister's sudden resolve; she was told that it was on Sibyl's account.

"I think it wise to take her away from Hillminster—at any rate, for a little while; for she has conceived an attachment that is never likely to prosper. Unless Isabel has told you, you will hardly guess for whom," said Lady Mary.

"Is it Mr. Digby Stuart?"

"Yes. But how do you know it?"

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"Is it Mr. Digby Stuart?"

"Yes. But how do you know it?"

"The idea came into my head last night, and but for certain other circumstances I could imagine he had a predilection in her favour too. I am sure he admires her, and if he were free to marry, which from past

events it is commonly supposed he is not, I would never advise you to take her out of the way. I am sorry for you, Mary; I wish she could have loved George, poor child!"

And then it was decided that Sibyl had better go; whether ever to return to Hillminster or not, might be left for subsequent consideration. But she could not go for several days yet. Ladies travel with impedimenta which cannot be packed up at a moment's notice, and during those several days occurred certain circumstances which, trivial as they were in themselves, tended to increase the feverish ill-feeling of Isabel. She had acted a cruel part by Sibyl in making her feel herself degraded by her secret love, and Lady Mary's displeasure and resentment were evident. Then Mr. Danvers came to call, bringing his two pretty boys, and during his chat with Lady Anne Vernon, he committed them especially to Sibyl's care, and they made friends with her sweet face at once. Again, each afternoon on one pretence or another came poor George Lansmere, like a demented moth fluttering round a candle-flame that is dropping low in the silver socket; and though such frequent visits were unusual, Mr. Digby Stuart was to and fro every day between Hillminster and Alverston, and twice the dean brought him in to luncheon. Then he met Lady Mary and Sibyl in the High Street, attended them on a shopping expedition, and conducted them home to the deanery when it was over. The next morning he dropped in at eleven o'clock, and sat chatting in the little drawing-room for an hour with the girls.

"I don't know what to think, I never knew him do such a thing before," said Lady Anne, musingly, to her sister. "If it means anything, he will not be frustrated by your carrying Sibyl off, depend upon that. He will either follow you or write."

Lady Mary indulged in the pleasures of hope, too; she was very willing to believe what she would have liked to be true. Isabel looked on with jealous rage. Sibyl was almost happy, almost herself again, during those final days at the deanery; her childlike love was easily fed and satisfied.

"You are in a state of beatitude now; take care, or you will have to repent it in dust and ashes!" said Isabel to her, with a vicious glance and a tone of anything but blessing.

"Oh, Isabel, how you do hate me!" was Sibyl's indignant rejoinder.

This was on the last night of their being together. The next morning Isabel went out at a quarter before ten to minster prayers, and during her absence Lady Mary Rivers and her daughter left. The cousins thus parted without good-byes. Neither had good-by been said to Mr. Digby Stuart.

"He does not know where we are going, does he, mamma?" Sibyl asked on their way to the station.

"No, darling! he is not aware of our leaving Hillminster, unless you have told him."

"I have not told him, mamma."

"If he wishes to know he can find out by inquiring at the deanery. Aunt Anne has our address."

The same evening Lady Mary Rivers and Sibyl were at home in their pleasant lodgings at Scarbro.

Two days passed over without incident, bright September days, sunny in fading woods, sunny on lake-like sea. On the third night the wind changed and blew for storm. On the third morning a heap of letters was brought in by the landlady and ranged on the breakfast-table. When Lady Mary Rivers came downstairs with Sibyl, she took them all in her hand, looked them over, and tossed one lightly across to her daughter, saying: "From your cousin Isabel;" and then with a half-sigh of disappointed expectation opened another from Lady Anne Vernon, and plunged into its closely written pages, where she found enough to interest her, and take her attention entirely away from Sibyl, until she heard her cry in a voice of thrilling delight, "Mamma, mamma!" when, looking round, she saw her clutching her letter to her bosom, while her face grew rosy with blushes, and her eyes glistened through tears of unutterable joy.

"What is it, my own darling?"

Sibyl came and knelt down by her mother, and put the letter into her hands.

"My happy child, my fortunate child!" murmured Lady Mary as she read it. "My happy child, my fortunate child! How shall I thank heaven enough for sparing you the anguish of a wasted love?"

The letter was a proposal of marriage to Sibyl from Mr. Digby Stuart, couched in almost romantically tender terms; full of affectionate enthusiasm and professions of unalterable fidelity—a lover's letter to a girl of whose responsive love he entertains not the slightest doubt; a little reproachful now and then that she should have left Hillminster without warning him; but only reproachful as by right. Lady Mary remembered her Irish subaltern and her own courting days as her eye ran swiftly along the sweet, fervent lines, and blessed God who had given her darling such a joyful lot when she seemed to be hanging on the brink of a woman's sorest tragedy. It was a morning of quite delirious happiness for them both. Outside the rain lashed vehemently, the wind ravened, the sea was churned into yeasty mountains of foam; but indoors hope and love reigned supreme. Sibyl must answer her letter, and she needed no teaching how; her heart bade her respond to it with honest joy, and Lady Mary could not find in hers to curb the sweet utterance of such pure and fond affection. So the letter was written and sent, Sibyl carrying it to the post herself through the blustering storm, and her mother, after a gentle, ineffectual remonstrance, accompanying her.

By night she seemed to have lived half a life since the blissful morning, and by night she was a little weary; glad to lie by the fire and dream

silently over her glorious happiness. Lady Mary watched her with tender satisfaction, and suffered her to rest a long while undisturbed; but at length she asked, "By-the-by, Sibyl, what news had you from your cousin Isabel? I did not remember to inquire before."

"I had no letter from cousin Isabel; I had no letter but *this*." *This* was warmly hidden somewhere in the bosom of her dress.

"Indeed! the address struck me as being like her hand: she does write a bold hand like a man's."

Sibyl drew out the precious document to consider it, and took the opportunity of re-perusing it down to the last dear word. By that time she had forgotten her cousin Isabel and all about her; and with a kiss on the signature, and a sigh of intense joy, she restored it to its safe hiding-place, and fell into another delicious reverie.

All that night the winds beat and the tempest raged. Wrecks, broken wrecks, drifted in upon the strand, and still the gale gathered and grew until the morning.

"It has been an awful night," said Lady Mary; "and it is an awful morning. God have pity on all poor souls at sea!" She was standing at the window, gazing out on the writhing trees and shrubs of the cliff-gardens, and Sibyl stood by her with hand and chin resting on her mother's shoulder. Lady Mary, turning round by-and-by from her dreary contemplation, saw tears standing in her child's eyes, and asked, with sudden anxiety, what ailed her darling.

"I don't know, mamma, but I have had such cruel dreams. I cannot recal them, but I feel the pain, the dreadful pain and oppression of them yet," was the grievous reply; and then the brimming tears overflowed and fell.

Lady Mary did not try to rally Sibyl out of her weeping mood; a strange sense of trouble impending took possession of herself. She endeavoured to reason it down, and to think this depression was a simple consequence of yesterday's excitement; but do what she would, or say what she would, her feeling of uneasiness increased. She had a presentiment, as people say, that something was going to happen. "If it were fit weather we would walk on the cliff and get these cobwebs blown out of our brains," said she, as they sat down to breakfast. "How the blast howls in the chimney! I never heard it howl as it howls here."

So Lady Mary fancied; but the storm that was raging over Scarbro was raging all over the county, and all over the kingdom. Through the windy towers of Hillminster and through the creaking fir-woods at Alverston howled the blasts, with the same hoarse triumph as they howled round about the house by the sea, where she and Sibyl sat watching the livelong day.

At Hillminster all went on in the regular routine; at Alverston the master came downstairs in the morning quietly non-expectant, like a man who has little to hope and little to fear, either from the world within or the world without. The post-bag lay on the table, but he went first

to the window and scanned the weather, noted how the great trees swayed and bent before the long rush of the storm, then rose erect and tossed their wild hair, as if in frantic defiance of their tormentors.

The entrance of a servant bringing in breakfast caused him to relinquish his survey; and before seating himself at the well-spread table he unlocked the bag and drew forth its contents—*The Times*, the *Quarterly Review*, and a dozen or more letters, amongst them Sibyl's, conspicuous in its delicate, blush-tinted envelope. It was so different from the rest that Mr. Digby Stuart naturally singled it out, paused a moment over the unfamiliar writing, and then broke the seal. The servant had quitted the room, and he was alone—fortunately alone. As he read the first few lines a feeling of utter bewilderment came over him; he turned the page to look at the signature, and then a dark flush suffused his face, which deepened and deepened as the sense of the letter forced itself on his understanding, until no girl ever showed more cowed with shame and confusion than did he.

"What an infamous jest!" was his low-spoken comment. "What a cruel, infamous jest!"

Mr. Digby Stuart was not a vain man, but he knew at once this letter was no forgery; it was the naïve, happy response of an innocent girl to some base fabrication that had been but too successfully imposed upon her in his name. If he had been her mother he could not have felt more indignant and more pitying. Not a grain of contempt mingled with his wrath. "If it lay with me only to prevent it, she should never know what a wicked trick has been played upon her. She is a good little thing. It was such a pleasure to look at her blithe face, to listen to her blithe tongue!" He was about to take up the letter and read it again, but he checked himself—"What can I do? what ought I to do?" groaned he. "It is some woman, some malicious, bad woman who hates her, that has done it." He sat a long while considering, his breakfast untouched, his other letters unopened; and the longer he considered, the more painful and perilous appeared the way out of this atrocious dilemma. "I'll ride over to Hillminster, and consult Jessie; I must prevail on her to undertake it. I dare not face Lady Mary; and as for this child," he paused, with an exclamation of intolerable compassion and rage, his hand on the letter containing her fond confession, her innocent, joyous reciprocation of all the tender things said to her in the fictitious epistle which she had received as from himself. He rang the bell, and gave orders to have his horse saddled and brought round to the door within ten minutes; and at the end of that time he was mounted and galloping away to Hillminster, through the driving rain.

Sir Jasper Raymond's house was in the Close, not far from the deanery, and Mr. Digby Stuart's appearance there before ten o'clock in such inclement weather gave rise to some speculations amongst the inmates of other stately dwellings about the minster, who happened at that hour to be taking note of what was passing out of doors. He dis-

mounted, drenched and dripping, and, asking for Lady Raymond, was ushered into the library, where she joined him almost immediately.

"Jessie, I want your help," said he, advancing to meet her as she entered.

"It is always at your service, Philip; what is your present need? Sit down, pray; you look ill."

"Some person has played off a sorry jest upon Lady Mary Rivers' daughter and myself. I hardly know how to tell even you, Jessie, it is so cruelly mortifying: and I am at my wits' end how to act. Sibyl has written me a dear little letter in answer to one she believes me to have written to her, of which, God knows, I never thought or penned a line."

"It is Isabel Vernon," said Lady Raymond.

"*Isabel Vernon!* Her own cousin! A woman who must have known the sweet, innocent thing she is."

"Yes; Isabel hates Sibyl—only her own bitter heart can tell why—and this is her shameful revenge. The poor girl betrayed her secret to me early; and Isabel's sharp eyes spied it out a week ago. Let me see Sibyl's letter, then I can advise you better what steps to take."

Mr. Digby Stuart gave it reluctantly, but he did give it; and as Lady Raymond read it, womanly tears glittered in her eyes. Her sole comment, as she came to the conclusion, was—"If you were free, Philip, I would bid you make her your wife; you could not have a dearer or a better."

"But I am not free," was his response.

"You were kind to her; I observed that you liked to be near her, listening to her songs and her prattle."

"Yes, yes; I am conscious of it now. She pleased me—there can be no blame attached to her. Many a man has offered marriage to a woman, and been accepted on slighter grounds than I gave her. But, Jessie, it is not to excuse her I am here now—she needs no excuse to me of all the world. It is to entreat you to be my mediator; to entreat you to see Lady Mary, and explain the cruel jest that has been played upon the child. If any sacrifice within my power could spare it to them I would make it, but I am fast bound hand and foot."

Lady Raymond was frightened at his proposition. "Would it not be easier to compel Isabel Vernon to write, and own to her wicked mischief?" suggested she.

"Easier for us, certainly, but not for Sibyl or her mother. You have kind ways, Jessie; if any one can soften the pain of wounded love and pride, *you* can. Let me burn her poor little letter; it is sacred as a surprised secret of life and death." He took a few perfumed twigs from a spill-case on the chimney, lighted them at the fire, and held the letter in the flame, until it shrunk into tindery film, and fluttered down upon the ashes of the hearth.

"You wish me to go to them, and to-day?" said Lady Raymond.

"Yes, Jessie, I am requiring a hard thing of you!"

"My heart aches for Sibyl, Philip; have I not known the sorrow? but mine was the sorrow without the cruel shame that will embitter hers. I know not how she will bear it, for she is as proud and pure as she is passionate and tender. Isabel Vernon has one plea for her baseness—she does not know what love means. No woman who has ever loved could have played this sorry jest in such deadly earnest."

"Isabel Vernon's part can wait. You will go to Sibyl and Lady Mary?"

"Yes. Sir Jasper is not ailing much this morning; you must keep him company in my absence, and explain as far as needs. If I prepare now, I can start by the noon train which reaches Scarbro about five."

"God bless you, Jessie! you are a good woman. Trouble has made you very pitiful?" They shook hands on it, trusty friends now, who had been lovers once, and in half an hour Lady Raymond was on her way.

At Scarbro the hours had been strangely long with Sibyl and her mother; and neither had done much to occupy them. Sibyl watched the rain, and the trees, and the sea, with folded hands on her lap and frequent sighs. When it began to darken, Lady Mary bade her come away from the window to the fireside; but she either did not heed or did not hear, for she was still cowering within the curtains when the maid arrived to close them, and brought in lights. The room-door was left ajar while the young woman performed her duties, and during that moment a voice was heard on the stairs which caused Sibyl to start to her feet and cry: "It is Lady Raymond. Why does she come here?"

Her mother had no time to answer before Lady Raymond entered with an ineffectual pretence of ease which she soon dropt. She kissed Sibyl, who stood on the spot where she had risen and made no advance to greet her, and then seated herself beside Lady Mary, keeping fast hold of her tremulous hand.

"Tell us," whispered the mother faintly, glancing towards her daughter. "I guess, but tell us quickly."

"Lady Mary, that love-letter Sibyl replied to yesterday was not written by Mr. Digby Stuart, but by her cousin Isabel Vernon," answered Lady Raymond, forcing out the words with a choking sensation. She could not have added another syllable to soften them if her own life had depended on it, and for the next five minutes there was not a sound in the room. Lady Mary was the first to break the silence.

"Where is that letter, Sibyl? Let us show it to Lady Raymond," was what she said. Sibyl neither moved nor spoke. "My darling, give me the letter," repeated her mother, rising and going to her. Still Sibyl was mute and motionless. Her mother took it out of her bosom; she neither resisted nor uttered a word. Her mother kissed her cooingly as she would have kissed a baby, but she might as well have kissed a face of stone. "What is it? What ails her, Lady Raymond?" stammered she, greatly alarmed.

"It must be the shock; let us lay her down; when she gets leave to

cry she will be better." So they laid her down, and where they laid her there she remained, never closing eye or moving limb or lip, suddenly stricken as by a total suspension of every sense, every faculty. They watched by her the night through, and there was no change. They watched by her till the morning, and there was no change. They watched by her through the sunny autumnal day that came after the storm, and there was no change when the sun went down; there was no change any more on earth in the breathing statue that had been instinct once with youth and joyous love, and all the hopes of life in blossom-time.

And how did it all end? This is a true tale, and therefore it can have no end in particular; no neat tying up of loose tags; no decisive sentences of moral or poetical justice.

"I did it in jest. I never expected the letter would deceive her or aunt Mary either," was Isabel Vernon's quivering defence when her work was brought home to her. Good-natured persons gave her the benefit of the doubt.

Sibyl survived several years. Many expedients were devised to rouse her; cruel expedients they may seem to us. For a little while she was parted from her mother, and during that period Mr. Digby Stuart and her cousin Isabel were introduced into her presence, with some vague hope that the sight of them might break the spell that held fast-bound her powers of volition. All in vain. They were *alike* to her; him she had loved, and the woman who had done worse than slain her! Isabel disguised herself carefully in her dread of recognition; she need not have dreaded it; Sibyl did not know her own mother.

After a time, professional treatment failing, and the poor soul being quite harmless, Lady Mary took her home again, and they lived in an old-fashioned house, inclosed in a walled garden, in one of the quiet suburbs of Hillminster. George Lansmere once begged to be allowed to see her. "Why give yourself the pain, my dear boy?" Lady Mary said. "She will not remember you, nor will you remember her." But he did; he saw sweet Sibyl still in that passive figure sitting in the sun, burnt-brown her face as a gleaner's in the harvest-fields, with short rusted hair, and wide pathetic eyes, in which there was no expression but the expression of an animal, wounded, and in desperate pain. Whether she really suffered I cannot tell. Lady Mary long entertained hopes of her restoration; and when friends asked after her daughter, which they did often because it gratified her to know her darling was not forgotten, her usual reply was that she fancied she was a *little* clearer, a *little* brighter.

She had been in this state nearly seven years, when one Sunday morning—Easter-day morning it was—Lady Raymond was summoned from her pillow an hour before dawn, by a message from the old-fashioned house in the suburb. Through the still streets, ere the world was awake, she hurried; and when she entered the garden, where the first sun-rays were gleaming and the birds were all a-twitter, Lady Mary met her—

met her almost cheerfully. "Too late! you are too late, love; she is gone. It has pleased the good God to take her," said she; then replying to a felt but unspoken inquiry, she added, "No; she did not know me—not even at the last. But she will know me in heaven, she will know me again in heaven!"

Sir Jasper Raymond died in the autumn of the same year as Sibyl, and then the gossips began to say again that Mr. Digby Stuart would marry the widow; but he did not. *Why*, remained still their secret. It was not until nearly ten years after the holy Easter morning when Death came with his merciful order of release to Sibyl, that they were privately married in London. They were then no longer young, but Jessie was always a sweet and loving woman; they married as soon as he was *free*—free from *what* or from *whom* is matter of speculation to the general community of Hillminster still. But Lady Anne Vernon, and one or two others of Mrs. Digby Stuart's nearest and dearest friends, know now that their long separation was due to an old, old folly of his boyhood, when he was deluded into a secret marriage in Paris with a beautiful white witch of a woman, who shortly left him, and would afterwards neither live with him nor die to release him. She set up her tent in Rome, and held there a semi-vagabond court of all nations, maintained in part by his liberal allowance, but chiefly by the contributions levied on her train of Platonic admirers, artist folk, gamblers, and the like. She called herself by a picturesque title, and was eccentric rather than bad.

Julia Vernon married Mr. Danvers. She has no children of her own, but she is an excellent mother to his.

Isabel also married—well as to rank and fortune, very meanly as to mate. She also is childless, and on the face of her, she is an unhappy, dissatisfied woman, whom few persons love—she herself loving few or none.

The dean is dead, and Lady Anne lives with her sister Lady Mary, in the old-fashioned house in the suburb.

George Lansmere is lieutenant-colonel now by promotion won in the field of battle. He wears many decorations, amongst others the Cross of Valour, and a bit of glory in an ugly sword-cut across the left cheek and temple. He is still a bachelor, and his own mother being long since dead, he calls Lady Mary "mother;" when he has a few days' leave to spare, he goes *home* to her like a son.

This is all the end I have to tell to this story of a sorry jest played out in earnest.

Paint, Powder, Patches.

WHEN Lord Foppington "entered into human nature," which is his grand euphuism for being born, his first object seems to have been to change his person as speedily as possible. The Foppington race, male and female, have followed the fashion with alacrity ; but my lord was not the first of his race. In all times, and in as many climes, there has been a certain disinclination to leave matters as Nature gave them ; and probably nothing has more extensively suffered, in this way, than the head.

If to the head nature gave one shape, to the face one complexion, to the hair one colour, to the ears one form, fashion forthwith held it as her privilege to give another. It was so of old, and it is so now.

The ladies and gentlemen of Pontus, for example, and of other Eastern cities were proud of such children as had sugar-loaf heads. It was a sign they were of the right *tap* ; and when a child was born, it was the first duty of all concerned to mould its head into the figure of the conical cap once worn by Oriental potentates. In old days, in Belgium and Portugal, newly made mothers looked on with delight at the efforts made to shape the infant's head according to the prevailing fashion—the long, and not the high head being then deemed the most aristocratical. To help to the attainment of this effect, little babies were always put to sleep resting on their sides and temples. Ancient Germany had also an especial regard for her damsels, among whom short heads were the distinctions of beauty. If Pericles was satirized by the comedians of his time, it was because the old dame who assisted at his birth had left his head as she found it, and had not shaped it into the very round form which alone obtained favour in the eyes of the Athenian ladies, marriageable or not. It would take a volume to show merely the various fashions among heads, and I am induced to believe, that not only the dog-headed but the *headless* people, of whom we read in ancient authors, were so called from certain modes, according to which the former won their designation, and the latter so stooped, in order to look dignified, that their heads seemed, as old writers described them, not growing *on* their shoulders, but *out* of their breasts.

Then, what vexation must it have been to lovers who were poets, in those old benighted places, where to be bald was to be lovely ! In those places, mostly in Asia, where relics of the fashion may still be met with, a nymph with flowing locks would have been a monster to be shunned by her disgusted swain. But a fine smooth, hairless pate, if you please, that was a matter to take a man's heart away. A young girl's head,

which she had rendered as bald and as ruddy as the sunny side of an apple, that was the magic by which disturbance was carried into the bosoms of adorers! Only to be permitted to touch this highly polished surface of all that was dear to him, was felicity to a wooer! but permission to touch with his lips the sinciput of the bald beloved—oh, the ecstasy is not to be told!

Montaigne, I think, was never so angry as when he referred to the old fashion of the Gauls who wore their hair long before and shaved it close behind. The philosophical essayist was not angry with his ancestors, but with his contemporaries. He lays it lustily on these wanton youths and effeminate gallants who had renewed the old barbarous fashion, or who at least had so far renewed it as to wear long dangling locks before, with a close crop behind; but fashion has gone even beyond this. In South Africa it was formerly the custom to shave one side of the head and to wear curling locks over the other, precisely as the lay figure does in hairdressers' shops, whereby is represented the condition of an individual's head before and after using the fructifying pomade sold on the premises. In Gallia-Comata must have arisen the once famous race of French *friseurs*. Fashion gave a name to a country, and made glorious the calling of *artistes en cheveux*.

The European fashion of powdering the hair white was long an astonishment and a stumbling-block to other nations. To simulate an effect of old age seemed to them an absurdity worthy only of savages. When the ambassador of young George the Third exhibited his royal master's portrait to a mandarin, the latter only remarked, "This cannot be he, for you told me your king was young, whereas here is a grey-headed man." Eastern nations, indeed, wore powder also; but with them it was only for the purpose of turning the hair black, for which purpose we "savages" have, and always have had, certain devices. At the end of the last century there was a particular tinge of red hair (and very beautiful, but very rare, it is; you may see it in the pictures of old masters) which came into fashion. And to give this tinge to hair which did not possess it, a powder was invented by a French artist, and much patronized by Marie Antoinette. This was the *poudre-maréchale*. It was of a sparkling reddish brown, and had such an effect in heightening the complexion that actresses took to it kindly, and abused it outrageously.

Now this *poudre-maréchale* was only a return to that old mode whereby reddish hair was esteemed the only killing colour for a lady. But I think the old modish red (of the Saxon, for instance) was only red in the sense that gold is said to be so by the poets. Certainly golden hair was a snare to Saxon hearts, and the girls whose heads lacked that enchantment used to try to acquire it by sitting in the sun; and when that process failed they were wont to sprinkle their locks with powder of saffron, and in cases where this failed, with powder of sulphur. The old fathers vehemently censured this custom, and declared that hell-fire would come of it; but the female part of Tertullian's congregation *Gallicized* themselves with

saffron or sulphur powder only the more vehemently. We laugh at this vanity, but "jessamine butter," it is not to be forgotten, was largely used in King Charles's time, with a similar end in view. In the same king's reign first arose the fashion of using hot irons to frizzle the hair. After all, this was but a plagiarism from the Romans. The hair, which in Charles's time was brought down over the forehead, in both men and women, and almost down to the eyebrows, went up again under the Roundheads, who brought furrowed foreheads into fashion, as denoting righteousness.

Now, it was the delight of a Scythian, also, that the forehead should appear wrinkled. Aristophanes said of the Samians that they were the best-lettered nation he knew. The fact was, men and women, as if inaugurating patches, wore the impress of letters on their foreheads and cheeks. The eyebrows, too, have suffered as much abuse of nature as the forehead in which they are set. Some people reduced them to a line, others cultivated them into a ridge; Peruvian women cut them off and offered them to the sun, and in Purchas's *Pilgrims*, mention is made of some Eastern women who ran their eyebrows into triangles. But the prettiest story I know of eyebrows is of those which shaded the lovely eyes of the most lovely young Lady Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Her sire bade her look with favour on a suitor unknown to her; but Lady Georgiana cared only to look with favour on Henry Fox (afterwards Lord Holland). When the duke first informed his daughter that the suitor of whom he approved would appear that day at dinner, and expressed a hope that, all wayward as she was, she would make herself agreeable to him, the young lady was resolved to do the very reverse. She went to her dressing-room, cut off her eyebrows, frightened her would-be lover by her strange appearance, and then ran away with the old lover, who was not in the least alarmed by it. The sacrifice of Peruvian eyebrows to the sun was a poor conceit, compared with this of Lady Georgiana Lennox to love; and it is pleasant to record that, in the latter case, they not only grew again, but with them abounding joy and ever increasing happiness—till her ladyship fell into the habit of taking six hundred drops of laudanum daily!

Then, what tricks used to be played with the eyelids—and, indeed, very pretty consequences are obtained by the discreet playing of them even now. It was far different of old, when Hottentot damsels contrived to turn them back over the brow, the under portion being laid back on to the cheek. *That* must have been a sight to move a lover! Painted eyelids, again, may have been perilous to look at; but I do not understand the idiosyncrasy of those Transatlantic Indians who loved their charmers best when their eyelids had no lashes to them. Such a fashion would have robbed of her charms that lady richly endowed in beauty of the eyes, who is mentioned by the Prince de Ligne, and who was so proud of her dowry, that if you asked how her ladyship did, she would answer, "I suffer a little in my superb eyes." The hussy! Thereby suffered myriads of men.

I do not know why the nose and the ears have been especially chosen for adornment by honest folk of old, and of small cultivation. Gold and silver and precious stones have been especially their portions. Nevertheless, if a Mogul lady had a nose from which a ring could hang, she would certainly cut it off. A couple of nostrils and no nose used to form the most perfect idea of beauty in the mind of a Tartar lady of good principles and unimpeachable taste. And I am inclined to think that I would rather make love to *her* than to those Eastern ladies mentioned by pagan, and those Western ladies noticed by early Christian and equally veracious, writers, whose ears, by artificial fashionable training, reached down to their feet, and were so broad that the fair one could wrap herself round with them, and hide a couple of friends beneath them, into the bargain!

Into what monstrosities the prettiest lips in the world may be turned we all know who have seen portraits of the Batuecas. Pretty cheeks, too, have suffered in this respect, and some have thought that patches were but the descendants of those cheek-scars which the primitive wives of primitive and *balafre'd* warriors used to inflict on themselves, in order to look like their much battered lords. This may have been so, but another origin, and indeed more than one, may be assigned to the fashion of wearing patches.

Nothing, I believe, is more certain than that the patches or scars, and the tattooing of savage tribes, were originally used by them to celebrate some particular event, to honour some great warrior, or to perpetuate the memory of some vast calamity. There is, however, another theory touching this question which I will briefly narrate.

Once upon a time—the chronology is fixed after some such fashion by Clearchus—a number of Thracian women fell captives into the hands of certain Scythian ladies. The prisoners were better favoured than their mistresses, and as this pleasant fact did not escape the admiring eyes of their masters, the Scythian ladies were sorely troubled thereat; and there was dissension in many a household.

The Scythian husbands, however, let their hard-featured wives rail on, but they made Hebes of their captive handmaidens, and as these lifted the cup to the brawny hands of their lords, the latter, with their habitual indifference to propriety, would pat the cheek of the bearers, look on their wives, and laugh “consumedly.”

And the cheeks of these maidens, glowing as the rose in the diffusive rays of the sun, became hateful in the eyes of the much vexed matrons. How they might mar the beauty that was there enthroned became with the community of angry wives the most serious social question of the period. Jealousy sharpened their ingenuity; and the motion of a ruffled consort of one of the most faithless of the husbands, to cover the pretty cheeks of the captives with hideous spots, was unanimously adopted.

But what spots? The blooming Thracian girls would not drink strong drinks, like their thirsty and bloated owners, and thereby redden their noses or fix fever-patches on their cheeks. As for beating them, the eyes

of the weepers seemed all the brighter for the tears which fringed their lids—nay, one Scythian Lothario had been seen absolutely kissing them off. There was not much of the Samaritan spirit in him, but in this work of humanity the labour took the guise of a labour of love. The ladies were driven to their wits' ends!

At this juncture, one of the more angry fair, playing with the point of the dagger which she had drawn from her zone, remarked that she could cheerfully run an inch of it into the impertinent cheeks of these foreign hussies. This hint led to the suggestion of slashing their faces. The men were just then all absent, occupied in matters of hunting or of battle; what was easier than to seize the fair captives and make them ugly for ever?

Fear of their terrible consorts, however, restrained them for awhile; restrained them, indeed, until they resolved so to shape their act of vengeance that it should take the form of a compliment to their husbands. Thereupon, they seized the reluctant prisoners, bound them, and, with needles, pricked the right cheek of each into little patterns of sun, moon, and stars, which they filled up with dye; and, when the Scythian squires returned, after long absence from home, the ladies presented the Hebes, as new editions corrected and improved.

The accomplished fact was not accepted with alacrity by the gentlemen, and yet it led to a permanent fashion. The scattered figures were united by waving lines, symmetry was given to the pattern, which was extended to both cheeks, and the Scythian dames adopted it, by especial command of their tyrants. Thus was made the first attempt to introduce patches, not placed upon, but cut into, the flesh. It only partially succeeded; but it led to tattooing.

From Scythia to Ely, and from the “once upon a time” of Clearchus to the seventh century of the Christian era, is a wide step to make over time and space; but the step brings us to that queen and saint, Ethelreda, whose familiar Saxon name, St. Audry, and her own habits, as well as those bought and sold at the fair held on her festival day in June, have added to our vocabulary that very significant epithet, *tawdry*. Ethelreda had been a lively young lady, and had worn the only brilliant necklaces to be seen in the East Anglian court of her sire in Suffolk. But much dissipation and two husbands had made her look upon all worldly enjoyments as so much vanity, and the queen withdrawing from “society”—for that terrible institution was in force, even in those early days—shut herself up in a monastery, took to rigorous ways, renounced the use of water, except as a beverage, and became covered with spots about the neck and face, to her infinite peace of mind and general satisfaction.

St. Audry had no idea that these unsightly patches were the results of severity of life. She laid them to the account rather of luxury and vanity. “I was once too proud,” she would say, “of those splendid carbuncles which my mother, Hereswylda, gave me when I married poor Toubercht; and now I have an assortment of them which I think more

beautiful still." Her nuns, for she was lady-abbes of her damp convent, thought, as they looked at her, that she would be none the less seemly to the eyes of beholders if she would but cover what she called her carbuncles, with patches. The royal lady-abbes would not hear of it, but thereby the wearing of patches became a symbol, if not of religion, at least of a desire to be considered religious. Lacking the carbuncles, people who admired Ethelreda wore the patches as if the wearers possessed those precious signs of a rigid rule of life which they pretended to cover. Common-sense folk, with reasonable ways of looking at a matter, pronounced this fashion as being a thoroughly *taudry* affair.

There were others who ventured to suggest that there was greater beauty in cleanliness than in carbuncles or spots born of low diet and much dirt. These persons, with much freedom, spoke of the superiority of actual to metaphorical ablution; but thereat was St. Thomas of Ely sorely irritated. The dirt patches of Queen Ethelreda were to him as bright stars in a firmament of spiritual beauty. "Wash!" he would exclaim; "fie upon your washing! Besides, Ethelreda washed every hour, though ye know it not?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the captious folk, "then it certainly was not her face!"

"Face here, face there!" said St. Thomas; "the good queen and saintly lady washed her heart hourly; what profit would there have been to her in washing the body, after that? None! and water never touched it, except it fell upon her in the form of rain."

Accordingly, the personal cleanliness of the queen was accounted as unnecessary, seeing the amount of spiritual bathing to which she subjected her heart. How long Ethelreda's fashion prevailed it would be difficult to determine; perhaps the fact that her "spots" were lauded by Thomas of Ely led to the wearing of patches, not by ladies, but by men.

In Webster's time men wore patches for rheums; and Angelina, in the *Elder Brother*, alludes to patches being worn by men, in her speech to Eustace:—

"Tis not a face I only am in love with;
Nor will I say your face is excellent,
A reasonable hunting-face to court the wind with!
No, nor your visits each day in new suits,
Nor your black patches you wear variously,
Some cut like stars, some in half-moons, some lozenges,
All which but show you still a younger brother.

The allusions to patches in Butler denote that the wearing of them by men had passed away, but that the fashion was, as in Beaumont and Fletcher's time, whose description refers to their own period, the same as to form and variety with that noticed in the above quotation. I think the fashion died out under the Commonwealth, but that it revived with the Restoration.

Quiet men and honest women, however, were not always in a hurry to accept the fashions stamped by the approval of such a court as that of Charles the Second. Patches, nevertheless, had a fascinating effect on some of the most honest but, in this respect, most yielding of women. Do you not remember that August morning of 1660, when Mrs. Pepys came downstairs to breakfast, and very much astonished the good, yet too gallant, little man, her husband? They had been five years married, and few had been the unloving words that had passed between them, though there had been a few small provocations on either side. In silent wonder Mr. Pepys looked at his lady. He makes no record of having uttered a word, but he registered his surprise in his diary. "This is the first day," he writes, on the 30th of August, "that ever I saw my wife wear black patches, since we were married!"

He manifestly did not approve of the new mode, and he marked its spread with something like wonder. In October, he visits his friend and patron Lord Sandwich, who *does* admire patches. My lord is establishing himself as a fine gentleman; he is looking out for a French cook, is about to engage a master of the horse, and Pepys heard him "talk very high, how he would have," not only the above appendages to a family of quality, but have also "his lady and child to wear black patches; which methought was strange; but," adds Pepys, discerning the reason, "he has become a perfect courtier."

As with the patron, so with the client; and in this matter of patches, Pepys gradually became a perfect courtier too. Not all at once, however. It took him another month before he could well bring his mind to it; not that the strong-minded Mrs. Pepys had ceased to wear patches, but she had worn them without marital sanction, and she was a trifle unlovely in the eyes of her husband accordingly. That husband, however, was a philosopher, and magnanimously resolved to permit what he dared not positively forbid. In November he issued licence to his wife to do that which she had been doing and would have continued to do without it. But she gained something by accepting the permission without affecting to despise it, for Pepys remarks, with a pretty and unconscious simplicity, in November, "My wife seemed very pretty to-day, it being the first time I had ever given her leave to wear a black patch."

Of course, he now admired most what he had once despised. How could he ever have thought that patches marred the sunny Somersetshire beauty of his Elizabeth? They positively heightened it, and set her above princesses. When he saw the handsome Henrietta Duehess of Orleans, who had come on a visit to her brother, Charles the Second, and his own wife standing not far from her, at court, the power and excellent effect of the patch was established for ever in his mind. "The Princess Henrietta is very pretty," he says, ". . . but my wife standing near her, with two or three black patches on, and well dressed, did seem to me much handsomer than she!" Well said, Mr. Pepys! The Elizabeth St. Michel of his courting days queened it over Henrietta of England!

But what he had once disliked, and now admired in princesses, ladies generally, and his wife in particular, became intolerable in his eyes when it was assumed by women of less degree. In two years the patches had got among the milliners. One day in October, 1662, Mr. Pepys strolled about the Exchange, with this resulting profit to his lounge:—"Among other things observing one very pretty Exchange lass, with her face full of black patches, which was a strange sight."

The sight was no longer strange in Queen Anne's time. The ladies then had re-adopted patches. The *Spectator*, speaking as one of the four "Indian kings," or American chiefs, who were then being lionized about town, says:—"As for the women of the country, they look like angels; and they would be more beautiful than the sun, were it not for the little black spots that break out in their faces, and sometimes rise in very odd figures. I have observed that those little blemishes wear off very soon; but when they disappear in one part of the face they are very apt to break out in another. Insomuch that I have seen a spot in the forehead in the afternoon which was upon the chin in the morning!"

Patches have gone so slowly out that they have not yet altogether expired. The "beauty spot," still used by humble belles in out-of-the-way districts, is the last relic of the old, often dying, but never entirely dead fashion.

In Congreve's *Way of the World* a lady asks if all the powder is out of her hair, and gentlemen are introduced who, previous to being admitted to the ladies, comb their powdered periwig as they ascend the staircase. The use of powder was known in the army as early as 1655, and Southey's question, whether men or women first wore it, is therein solved. Powder was considered a great dignifier of the human head; but that depends on circumstances. A bald-headed monk is picturesque; powder him, and he becomes a caricature. The fact is, that powder cannot beautify without paint. A woman delicately powdered, artistically rouged, and her eyebrows left as nature coloured them, was a seductive picture in the Georgian era.

Of the early part of George the Third's reign there were not two beauties who painted, patched, and powdered more, or who needed it less, than Mrs. Hobart and Lady Coventry; the former, all in gauze and spangles, "like a spangled pudding," as a fine gentleman remarked; the latter, in a light blue dress, covered with round spots of silver, which made her look, according to George Selwyn, like "change for a guinea." Poor Lady Coventry! As long as paint could deceive her, she was slow to believe in consumption; but when the terrible truth forced itself upon her, she lay, all unpainted and unpowdered, gazing into a pocket-glass till she could bear no longer to contemplate the breaking-up of the wreck of herself. Nor would she offer that melancholy spectacle to the sympathy or indifference of others. She passed from couch and pocket-mirror to bed and closed curtains; and with no other light than that of a spirit-lamp beneath a kettle in her room, she received visitors and the

ministration of her servants, never doing more than passing her small hand between the curtains which hid for ever the living pale face of the once supreme beauty.

But this painting and powdering had its comic as well as its solemn side. There was no such a highly-coloured family in all Europe as that of the Duke of Modena. When young, he wore a lump of vermillion on one temple, that less notice might be taken of the wen on the other. When old, he married a more highly-painted woman than he had ever been a duke; and wits said, if they dared put their faces together, the colours would run together, like those on a couple of palettes in contact. The duke's sister, Benedetta, indulged in this fashion, the more extravagantly as she grew older; and Walpole describes her as painted and peeled like an old summer-house, with the bristles on her chin sprouting through the plaster. Travellers wended miles out of their way to see this gorgeously got-up family; but indeed there were similar exhibitions at home. When it took many hours to suit a lady's head and complexion to the humour in which she chose to be for the day, or to go with to court, the lady herself would sit up in state for an hour or two—an exhibition for her friends and her friends' servants. A lady's-maid excused herself for arriving late at a steward's-room party at Richmond, on the ground of her having gone to see the Duchess of Montrose, who was "only showed from two to four."

This duchess's contemporary, the old Duchess of Bedford, was a quicker or more careless dowager. We have an instance of this in her hurry at King George's coronation, when she got an idle lord to colour her wrinkled cheeks as she was passing through that appropriate locality, the Painted Chamber. "How do you look?" said her Grace of Queensberry. "Why, like an orange-peach, all red and yellow!" But this last peeress affected an extreme plainness. She went to church, like Madame Du Barry at Versailles, without rouge, or powder, or patches; and she went to court quite as meanly dressed as ever the famous Countess of Pembroke, of the previous century, was at home, namely, in a gown and petticoat of red flannel! And that, too, at a time when not only was luxury in dress at its highest, but kissing on the forehead was introduced for the reason mentioned by Lady Emily Gayville, in Burgoyne's comedy, *The Heiress*: "I perfectly acknowledge the propriety of the custom. It is almost the only spot on the face where the touch would not risk a confusion of complexions!"

It was an age, in short, when not only was there an abuse of paint, but an abuse of powder. Garrick dressed Hamlet absurdly enough; but in France, in Ducis' adaptation, Hamlet appeared on the stage in a powdered wig; but so did Orestes; O ye gods! Ay, as powdered as any French lacquey, who put on his powdering gown and mask as soon as he rose, dressed his head at daybreak as if he were going to carry it to court, went to his dirty work, and then waited at dinner, "frisé comme un bichon," with a three-days'-old pocket-handkerchief doing duty as a cravat!

Davenant, in a passage too long to quote, asserts that the practice of painting came to us from France. This is a bold assertion, considering that the first illustrious stranger who landed here from that country found our ancestors painted from head to foot, and, if not patched, very prettily tattooed. It is not clear to me that the British chiefs may not have been powdered also—after a manner; after that, for instance, of those Gaulish and some Germanic chiefs who powdered their hair with something resembling gold-dust. Be this as it may, painting the face certainly received its hardest blow in France. Tertullian never said anything smarter to the ladies of his congregation against wearing wigs—which might be made, he remarked, of the hair of dead people who were damned—than the Bishop of Amiens of a hundred years since said to a lady whose conscience was at issue with her desires touching the wearing of *rouge*. “Ah, ah !” exclaimed the good prelate, “one casuist affirms in one sense, a second casuist in another. I choose, my dear madam, a happy medium ; I sanction *rouging*. Paint, dear daughter, paint, since you so wish ; but only on one cheek, dear lady !” and the *chère dame* thereat laughed till she became as rosy as nature or modesty ever painted withal.

Perhaps, the witty and pleasantly cruel bishop was thinking of the passage in the prophet Jeremiah,—“Though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair. Thy lovers will despise thee.” And this recollection of Jeremiah reminds me of another passage in Isaiah, which I may quote after all this gossiping, and so end seriously with the ladies, to whom at this moment I more especially address myself. The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion was threatened by the prophet, because of their vanity, their pride of dress and their haughty or affected carriage. They were menaced with the loss of all that is dear to merely vain women,—the long list has, doubtless, often been conned by my fair perusers. Did it ever strike them that one of the penalties for vanity to which the daughters of Zion were to be condemned has really, and for the same especial reason, fallen upon the daughters of the Gentiles? With some of them, at least, excess in style of dress, and heedlessness of peril where they wore it, have realized that part of the solemn prediction which says : “And it shall come to pass that there shall be *burning instead of beauty!*”

Newspaper Writers in Germany.

FOURTEEN THOUSAND new books, it seems, compose the annual supply of solid reading in Germany, and journalism is represented by rather more than twelve hundred newspapers, of which two hundred and forty-nine are dailies. These last figures show us the activity of Germany Proper, excluding Posen on the part of Prussia, and all the non-German possessions of Austria. Who would not be tempted to give Germany the title of the republic of letters, but for the one circumstance which renders the name inappropriate—the existence of some thirty reigning sovereigns in that literary land?

When the first estate is thus predominant, the fourth must necessarily be depressed. And we see that the newspaper writers of Germany differ in many ways from the newspaper writers of England, just as the newspapers of the two countries are widely dissimilar. But the difference of type springs from a great variety of causes, some of which are as quickly detected in the newspapers themselves as they could be exposed in this article, being painfully forced on the most casual reader. The historian of early German journalism remarks that the meanest slave in India, so long as he can write, enjoys a freedom of the press that is denied to the most cultivated man in the most educated part of Europe. No one can have followed the course of the struggle in Prussia without being conscious of the narrow limits that are there accorded to the expression of opinion. In reproducing Lord Ellenborough's speech on Poland in February last, one of the most influential papers in Germany had to sacrifice the paragraph in which Prussia was warned of her approaching fate. "Here follows a passage which we shall not reproduce," says the editor; "suffice it that the orator alluded to the probability of a dangerous crisis taking place in Prussia itself." And yet this paper was not a Prussian newspaper, nor one that the Prussian Government would find it easy to attack; it was the *Augsburg Gazette*, the most generally circulated of all German newspapers, and published in the more tolerant Bavaria.

We know what stringent measures are enforced under the press laws of France, and are accustomed to read of first and second warnings, of newspapers existing only on ministerial sufferance, and of others suppressed by Imperial edict. But such despotism is unknown in Germany. Before 1848, indeed, journalism had a troubled life, and in many of the different States a rigid censorship existed. This formidable instrument appeared first in 1529, when the Diet of the Empire, assembled at Speier, decreed that all printed works were to be submitted to a judicious person appointed to examine them by the supreme authority. In the course of

time each separate State took into its own hands the work of legislating for all things published in its territory, and the press was free or shackled as the Government was liberal or illiberal. In Prussia the censorship was mild under Frederick the Great, but strict under his successor. In Austria it was extremely severe during the reign of Maria Theresa, but it almost disappeared under Joseph the Second. A store of anecdotes on the working of the Austrian censorship towards the end of the last century is given in the autobiography of a Viennese librettist and journalist of that time. According to his account, both press and stage were under the absolute authority of a mischievous stupidity. One censor would only allow the word God to be employed in the Court Theatre; would not tolerate a parody of "King Lear" because kings ought not to be made ridiculous; forbade Schiller's *Don Carlos* because the hero was in love with his stepmother, and had the murdered father in *The Robbers* turned into an uncle. The mildest possible jokes on the style of the official journal of Vienna were punished with a fine. All dedications were strictly forbidden, unless they were accompanied by the consent of the person to whom they were offered, and when a composer wrote a sonata to the manes of Hummel, the censor asked if the manes had accepted the dedication. Such was German censorship before the French Revolution. Under Napoleon the whole range of German literature was bound over to be subservient to France. The fate of Palm, a bookseller in Nuremberg, who was tried by a French court-martial, and shot, because he had forwarded to an Augsburg bookseller a pamphlet against Napoleon that he had received from some other firm, is sufficiently notorious, though the facts are often incorrectly stated. Even the *Almanach de Gotha* had to submit to the decrees of the conqueror, and to adopt a new standard of genealogy. But when Germany reappeared from under the flood of French dominion, the ancient censorship came up again little altered by its dive. Attempts were made at the Congress of Vienna to have liberal regulations issued for the press of Germany, but nothing came of them; and at the meetings of the Ministers of the Great Powers at Johannisberg, in 1824, and at Vienna, in 1834, increase of strictness was prescribed by Metternich and Russia. The present state of the press laws of Germany has not been clearly defined in any book that I can lay my hands on; but, as far as I can ascertain, it is by no means satisfactory. A virtual censorship exists, and is intrusted to the police, an official of which has the power of seizing the whole impression of any paper that attacks the home Government, or the Government of any of the States of the Bund. If the attack is unusually violent, amounting to treason against king or ministers, the paper may be sent to one of the upper courts for trial; in which case it has the constitutional safeguards of an open court and trial by jury. But the editor cannot appeal from the police seizure to a jury of his countrymen: he cannot claim the protection of the law unless he has done something to deserve its censure. His appeal goes to a superior officer of the police in the first instance, and to the president of

the district government in the second. If these two officials confirm the seizure, he has no redress, unless he chooses to bring the matter before the public and be punished constitutionally for objecting to an arbitrary confiscation. To quote one of Moore's satirical poems, the authorities "always have law on their side." Their powers are highly elastic, stretching widely for the Government, and contracting closely around the subject. Not only has every Government this power over its own papers, but it can confiscate any that come from the rest of Germany, can prosecute strange editors in *contumaciam*, or lodge a complaint against them before their native tribunals. A short time back two editors of Frankfort were sentenced, in their absence, to a term of imprisonment in Prussia; and all the Prussian officials were instructed to seize and imprison the said culprits if ever they set foot in the country. One of the senators of Bremen cannot come into Bavaria, because as editor of a Bremen paper he refused to give up the name of a Munich correspondent. This virtual exile may have its inconveniences, especially if an editor shuts all the States of Germany against himself, as Dick Swiveller shut all the streets of his neighbourhood. But the governments are only half contented with it, and greatly prefer having their editors on the spot. *The Times* correspondent told us the other day what was done with refractory journalists in Vienna; and although articles are not signed in Germany, the governments have a simple way of detecting their writers. A body of police is sent to search the newspaper office for the manuscript of an obnoxious article should the editor refuse the author's name; and if the MS. can be found, the handwriting is easily identified.

But restraints on the liberty of the press are not the only causes of the difference between German and English journalism. The number of independent States has led to a diffusion of newspaper activity over an immense surface, and to a consequent scattering both of ability and capital. As great intellects appear in the youth of nations when cultivation is not general, and all the power and knowledge of the time are concentrated in the heads of a few, so great newspapers flourish best where there is a decided centre, a necessary limit to competition, a fusion of the most striking talents. In Germany there are so many newspapers that the sale of one interferes with that of another, and the writers not being sufficiently paid by any one to confine themselves to it alone, must dilute their matter for a great many others. I have given the statistics for the whole of Germany at the beginning of this paper: of the chief States, Prussia has 528 newspapers, of which 71 are dailies; Austria Proper has 77, of which 38 are dailies; and Bavaria 138, of which 44 are dailies. The journals of Vienna and Berlin are of course very different from those of the smaller capitals, being supported by a more influential public, and living in the centre of action. But the newspapers which go most generally throughout Germany, and which chiefly represent its journalism abroad, are not those of Vienna and Berlin, but the *Augsburg Gazette* and the *Cologne Gazette*. And while many of the capitals of

smaller States have no daily newspapers (the principality of Lichtenstein being esteemed fortunate in not having any newspaper at all), some of the free towns publish more journals than they could support themselves, for the benefit of the States around them.

A picture of the newspaper office as it exists in Germany may best exemplify the journalistic life of the country. In the quietest part of a quiet old town is a house of quaint architectural build, its windows protected by wreathed ironwork, carrying the mind back to Quintin Matsys, the smith of Antwerp. You push open the large gate and find yourself in a vaulted hall, a court and garden in front of you, and the heavy stone staircase on one hand. The printing-office stands at the back of the house, flanked by an aged monastery. But for the speaking-tube which runs across the courtyard, connecting the editor's room with the printing-office, but for the clang of machinery, and the constant passage of messengers, you would think that all the buildings formed one monastic group, such is the mediæval air they breathe in their age and solitude. Up the staircase is the *redaction*, communicating on each side with the rooms of the principal editors. A couple of standing desks, a table in the middle littered with proofs, a row of shelves containing all the newspapers of the world, and the large mouth of a speaking trumpet, compose the furniture of this office. Respectable and cleanly boys—it is a profanation to call them printer's devils, or associate them with those grimy, villainous imps of whom we have portraits in our literary novels—come in with proofs for correction. A sub-editor is cutting out paragraphs from a German paper, or concocting the news of the day in alternations of written and printed characters. The French editor shows you the twelve Parisian daily newspapers out of which he has to extract the pith of French events, and weave it into a connected narrative between eight in the evening and a small hour of the morning. And oh! the mass of correspondence that has to be read, the mass of newspapers of all people, nations, and languages that must be skimmed over, before the German mind can have the full picture of the doings of the whole world, which is necessary to satisfy its thirst for knowledge.

The Viennese papers approach more nearly to the English type than those of the rest of Germany. This is no doubt owing in part to the size of the city, and the mode of life adopted by its inhabitants. The circulation of some of the chief papers in Vienna would not discredit London, and the fortunes that have been made by editors and publishers would create envy. The editor and owner of one paper is supposed to make 10,000*l.* a year, and has just married a countess. Another has retired from the post of editor with a fortune of 12,000*l.* to 15,000*l.* a year, and has his country seat in the neighbourhood of Vienna, with a park surrounding his mansion, and telegraphic communication between the house and the porter's lodge. The social harmony that prevails among journalists of Vienna is well known, and is one of the pleasantest features of the life of that capital. A society has been organized, the heads of which

are chosen from editors and writers, without any regard to their political views, and the bitterest foes in newspaper controversy meet there, *sans rancune*, on the most friendly footing. The example of Vienna has been followed in Berlin, while in some of the smaller towns of Germany difference of opinion leads to the most exaggerated bitterness. Not that the amenities of literature are preserved any the more for this social intercourse ; but as contending armies paused in the heat of battle to drink of the same stream, and exchanged civilities till the trumpet should sound again, so one would gladly see controversialists meeting without hatred in the intervals of argument. Here, indeed, is a stray sample of German newspaper hostilities which might prove too bitter a pill for any friendly familiarity : "Wanted a publicist to collect materials for deciding the following wager :—That there have been 500 untruths published in the — in the course of the last two years, not including those cases in which subsequent retraction was made. Honorarium 150 thalers, and 10 thalers more for every 25 untruths beyond the 500. Address to the office of this paper."

It is remarkable that most of the editors in Vienna are Jews, as also a large number of the contributors. In both classes are well-known names—names that appeared on the roll of the Frankfort Parliament of 1848, and are to be read in the records of the revolution of Vienna. As a general rule, in the Austrian capital, as in the other cities of Germany, the leading articles in each paper are written by the editor. There are some exceptions to this, but not many, and this fact constitutes a material difference between the German and the English custom. It makes the German newspaper a more personal concern ; it concentrates the responsibility, and compels a more decided consistency. The law requires the editor to sign his name at the end of each number of the paper, and the system of marking every original contribution with a symbol that is almost equivalent to a signature makes the writers equally cautious. Thus it results that in Germany all the papers are classified by their *colour*. The line that each one has to take on a question is decided from the beginning, and it would ruin a paper to make any deviation from the principles by which it is known. It may be doubted how far this excessive consistency is to be valued for writer or for reader. Who would care to be bound over to defend during his lifetime a cause that he had adopted without due consideration ? Who would care to read an article of which he could predict every turn of expression ? The staff of English papers is generally so large that there is little danger of a narrow adherence to a single view. But the German papers scarcely know the meaning of a staff of writers ; and, to carry out the simile, instead of being organized on the model of a regular army, they follow the volunteer principle. Some of them carry this principle so far as to dispense with regular leaders, and to rely on casual essays in their place. Instead of the stated leading-article writers to whom the quiet of Printing-house Square is essential, we have professors, or ex-statesmen,

or statesmen that are to be, living thirty or forty miles away from the newspaper office. Instead of the reporters whom *The Times* sends over the whole of England, we have voluntary correspondents settled in the various towns of Germany, and occupied in teaching, or in general literature, or in official life. Essay-writers and correspondents, alike, have their symbol, which is prefixed to every article. Those who particularly wish to be known make use of their initials; others take a single letter from the Greek alphabet, while the greater number resort to hieroglyphics. Different combinations of stars are the most frequent; a single star is the editorial sign, meaning no more than that the article is original, and has passed through responsible hands.

The number of correspondents kept up by every paper, as shown in the rich variety of hieroglyphics, cannot but fill one with wonder at the literary resources of Germany. Perhaps in one copy of a daily journal you find three correspondents from Vienna, three from Berlin, and one apiece from Munich, Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, and other minor capitals, not to mention the free towns of North Germany. There is a correspondent in London, of course, and another in Paris, several in Poland, and at least half-a-dozen in Italy. The *Augsburg Gazette* is famed for the extent of its foreign relations, being supplied by two regular correspondents in America, and by casual writers dating from such distant quarters as Jerusalem and Hong Kong. A certain familiar publicity is maintained in the relations between editor and correspondents. It is not unusual to see at the foot of a letter some expression of the editor's desire to have more of the same nature, or a request that the correspondent will send his address, so that the editor may communicate with him personally. But however pleasant such a recognition of your merits may be, it is by no means agreeable if your faults are dwelt on with equal distinctness. When a statement is contradicted you read an editorial note, "We have requested this correspondent not to write to us again;" or, more painfully still, "We have turned off the correspondent in question." The English journalist must congratulate himself on being exempt from such a public dismissal, even if he complains of the obscurity in which his favourite compositions are hidden. Nor will he have less reason to be thankful when the question of payment is considered. The general rate in German newspapers is 5*l.* a sheet, which comes to about a penny a line. Foreign correspondents are paid rather better, especially those in the East and in America. In some cases so much is given per letter, irrespective of the length. A traveller in Italy will get twelve shillings a letter; some Government employé in one of the minor capitals has five shillings a letter, and keeps the paper "posted"—as the slang is—with all the gossip of the Court. It is easy to conceive that when such is the scale of payment adopted by the chief papers, the German journalist must have several strings to his bow. And it is well known that a man who corresponds with one paper has often five or six others to which he communicates the same facts with slight changes of phrase. A journalist living in Vienna

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or Berlin, and employed on the staff of one of the newspapers there, will send letters over half Germany. The editor of one paper will act as correspondent of various others; or a sub-editor, whose leading articles are not appreciated at home, will find means to employ them abroad. Literary men in Berlin will no doubt remember an amusing occurrence of the year 1849, which caused a considerable stir at Stehely's, the confectioner's, where journalists most do congregate. A very hard-working, but not very brilliant, writer used to get others to assist him in disguising his letters. One day there was an important fact to announce, and nobody at hand to help him. The consequence was that a few days after, the Berlin letter in six different papers began with the striking phrase, "The bomb has exploded." If nothing else came of the explosion, the literary world of Berlin were pretty certain who had applied the match.

When I say that a Government employé supplies different newspapers with the gossip of the Court, I do not mean that Court secrets are betrayed. It is true that many of the German papers have an official connection, but this is shown in nothing more strongly than in their official reticence. The case of the late secretary of the Duke of Coburg may, perhaps, seem an exception; but it seldom happens that Government officials are less faithful to their regular master than to their casual employer. The correspondent shows a strange familiarity with unpublished despatches, is convinced that the Government intends to take certain steps, knows on the best authority that such and such rumours are unfounded. But if anything of real moment occurs in Court circles, if a scandal takes place which would make the fortune of a clubman, the correspondent is too well-bred to let a hint of it escape him. He chronicles royal appearances in the most fulsome tone; conveying the facts of the "Court Circular," in language to which Jenkins could never have aspired. But if a queen runs away from her husband, and all the world is talking about it, the correspondent seems to be in total ignorance. In all other cases, however, he is well-informed, and his letters are sufficiently full of accurate material to supply the foreign correspondents of other nations. In Berlin he is probably a member of the Chamber, and gets all the private details of political measures from the leaders of his party. The London correspondence of one of the chief German papers is supposed to emanate from the Privy Council. An occasional change of symbol is necessary with some of these writers, when they are near the persons of kings; but they are generally safe from detection, as it is notorious that German royalty never reads the papers.

But with the exception of these official persons, the German newspaper writer is more of a man of letters than his brethren in England. The journalistic mind, as it appears in some celebrated editors, is rather averse to literature in the abstract. It dwells almost exclusively on the subjects which are interesting at the present moment, the subjects which will serve for the next leading article. It pays more attention to contemporary history than to the good old times of chroniclers and antiquarians.

It considers books as objects for reviewing, great names as staple for allusion, and past events as commentaries or predictions. We constantly see writers of this class, whose utter distaste for everything literary, and limited acquaintance with the literature of the day, serve as singular comments on their employment. They may reasonably boast of being more akin to Macaulay than to Hallam; but to Macaulay without his chief characteristic. As there are two kinds of Ministers in France, those with a portfolio, and those with a voice, so might some English journalists be called Members of Parliament with a pen. I doubt if any such specimens are to be found in Germany. Journalism there is often taken up as a temporary support, as a means of increasing a professor's salary. One man who is engaged on a laborious work which will demand the best years of his life, devotes his spare half-hours to newspaper correspondence. Another, who is making grave researches in the archives of Italy or the Netherlands, contributes his passing impressions of travel, and is enabled to prosecute his scientific studies on the proceeds of his lighter labours. Perhaps the most striking example of this is to be found in Heine, who acted for a long time as Paris correspondent of the *Augsburg Gazette*, and the reprint of whose Paris letters has formed one of his best-known works. But from this habit a certain heaviness has resulted, which, together with an absence of direct interest, is still conspicuous in the German papers. Still the pressure of daily politics is gradually making itself felt, and is driving out the purely literary element, or confining it to the *feuilleton*. Much as we may regret the calmness and the exhaustiveness of early writers, compared with the reckless haste and the wilful one-sidedness for which they are too often exchanged, we cannot but accept the latter features as legitimate attendants of political growth, and we cannot expect even the blessings of constitutional liberty without a certain train of attendant vices.

The Small House at Allington.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BOARD.



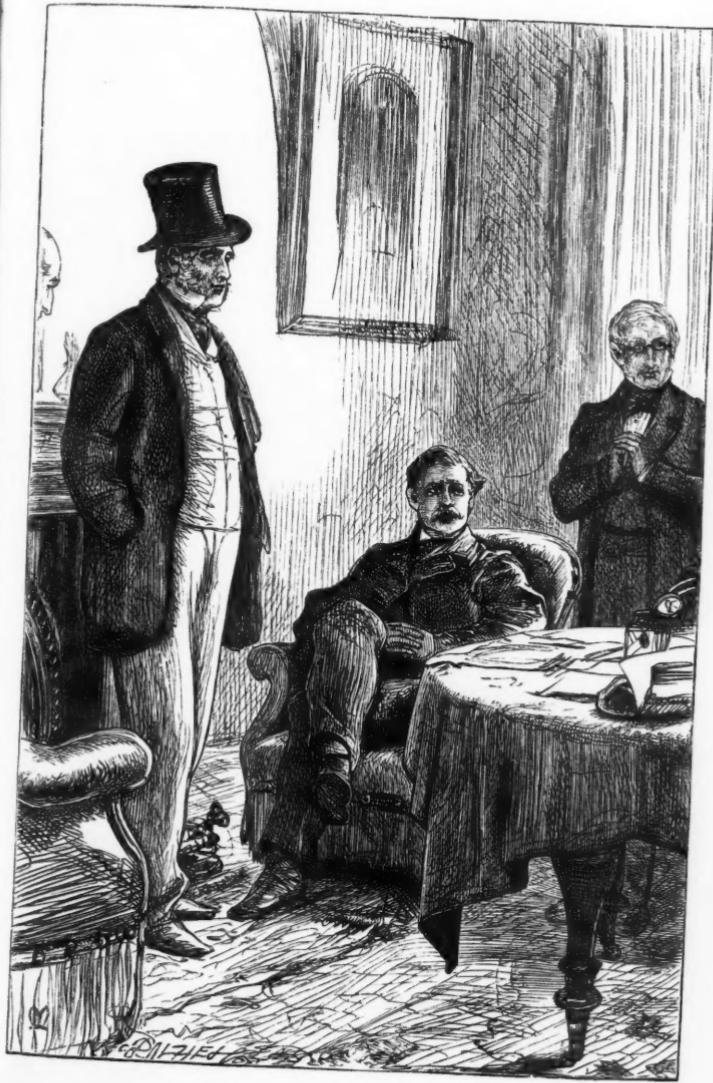
ROSBIE, as we already know, went to his office in Whitehall on the morning after his escape from Sebright's, at which establishment he left the Squire of Allington in conference with Fowler Pratt. He had seen Fowler Pratt again that same night, and the course of the story will have shown what took place at that interview.

He went early to his office, knowing that he had before him the work of writing two letters, neither of which would run very glibly from his pen. One was to be his missive to the squire, to be delivered by his friend ; the other, that

fatal epistle to poor Lily, which, as the day passed away, he found himself utterly unable to accomplish. The letter to the squire he did write, under certain threats ; and, as we have seen, was considered to have degraded himself to the vermin rank of humanity by the meanness of his production.

But on reaching his office he found that other cares awaited him,—cares which he would have taken much delight in bearing, had the state of his mind enabled him to take delight in anything. On entering the lobby of his office, at ten o'clock, he became aware that he was received by the messengers assembled there with almost more than their usual deference. He was always a great man at the General Committee Office; but there are shades of greatness and shades of deference, which, though quite beyond the powers of definition, nevertheless manifest themselves clearly to the experienced ear and eye. He walked through to his own apartment, and there found two official letters addressed to him lying on his table. The first which

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THE BOARD.



came to hand, though official, was small, and marked private, and it was addressed in the handwriting of his old friend, Butterwell, the outgoing secretary. "I shall see you in the morning, nearly as soon as you get this," said the semi-official note; "but I must be the first to congratulate you on the acquisition of my old shoes. They will be very easy in the wearing to you, though they pinched my corns a little at first. I dare say they want new soling, and perhaps they are a little down at heels; but you will find some excellent cobbler to make them all right, and will give them a grace in the wearing which they have sadly lacked since they came into my possession. I wish you much joy with them," &c. &c. He then opened the larger official letter, but that had now but little interest for him. He could have made a copy of the contents without seeing them. The Board of Commissioners had had great pleasure in promoting him to the office of secretary, vacated by the promotion of Mr. Butterwell to a seat at their own Board; and then the letter was signed by Mr. Butterwell himself.

How delightful to him would have been this welcome on his return to his office had his heart in other respects been free from care! And as he thought of this, he remembered all Lily's charms. He told himself how much she excelled the noble scion of the De Courcy stock, with whom he was now destined to mate himself; how the bride he had rejected excelled the one he had chosen in grace, beauty, faith, freshness, and all feminine virtues. If he could only wipe out the last fortnight from the facts of his existence! But fortnights such as those are not to be wiped out,—not even with many sorrowful years of tedious scrubbing.

And at this moment it seemed to him as though all those impediments which had frightened him when he had thought of marrying Lily Dale were withdrawn. That which would have been terrible with seven or eight hundred a year, would have been made delightful with twelve or thirteen. Why had his fate been so unkind to him? Why had not this promotion come to him but one fortnight earlier? Why had it not been declared before he had made his visit to that terrible castle? He even said to himself that if he had positively known the fact before Pratt had seen Mr. Dale, he would have sent a different message to the squire, and would have braved the anger of all the race of the De Courcys. But in that he lied to himself, and he knew that he did so. An earl, in his imagination, was hedged by so strong a divinity, that his treason towards Alexandrina could do no more than peep at what it would. It had been considered but little by him, when the project first offered itself to his mind, to jilt the niece of a small rural squire; but it was not in him to jilt the daughter of a countess.

That house full of babies in St. John's Wood appeared to him now under a very different guise from that which it wore as he sat in his room at Courcy Castle on the evening of his arrival there. Then such an establishment had to him the flavour of a graveyard. It was as though he were going to bury himself alive. Now that it was out of his reach, he thought of it as a paradise upon earth. And then he considered what sort of a

paradise Lady Alexandrina would make for him. It was astonishing how ugly was the Lady Alexandrina, how old, how graceless, how destitute of all pleasant charm, seen through the spectacles which he wore at the present moment.

During his first hour at the office he did nothing. One or two of the younger clerks came in and congratulated him with much heartiness. He was popular at his office, and they had got a step by his promotion. Then he met one or two of the elder clerks, and was congratulated with much less heartiness. "I suppose it's all right," said one bluff old gentleman. "My time is gone by, I know. I married too early to be able to wear a good coat when I was young, and I never was acquainted with any lords or lords' families." The sting of this was the sharper because Crosbie had begun to feel how absolutely useless to him had been all that high interest and noble connection which he had formed. He had really been promoted because he knew more about his work than any of the other men, and Lady De Courcy's influential relation at the India Board had not yet even had time to write a note upon the subject.

At eleven Mr. Butterwell came into Crosbie's room, and the new secretary was forced to clothe himself in smiles. Mr. Butterwell was a pleasant, handsome man of about fifty, who had never yet set the Thames on fire, and had never attempted to do so. He was perhaps a little more civil to great men and a little more patronizing to those below him than he would have been had he been perfect. But there was something frank and English even in his mode of bowing before the mighty ones, and to those who were not mighty he was rather, too civil than either stern or supercilious. He knew that he was not very clever, but he knew also how to use those who were clever. He seldom made any mistake, and was very scrupulous not to tread on men's corns. Though he had no enemies, yet he had a friend or two; and we may therefore say of Mr. Butterwell that he had walked his path in life discreetly. At the age of thirty-five he had married a lady with some little fortune, and now he lived a pleasant, easy, smiling life in a villa at Putney. When Mr. Butterwell heard, as he often did hear, of the difficulty which an English gentleman has of earning his bread in his own country, he was wont to look back on his own career with some complacency. He knew that he had not given the world much; yet he had received largely, and no one had begrudged it to him. "Tact," Mr. Butterwell used to say to himself, as he walked along the paths of his Putney villa. "Tact. Tact. Tact."

"Crosbie," he said, as he entered the room cheerily, "I congratulate you with all my heart. I do, indeed. You have got the step early in life, and you deserve it thoroughly;—much better than I did when I was appointed to the same office."

"Oh, no," said Crosbie, gloomily.

"But I say, Oh, yes. We are deuced lucky to have such a man, and so I told the commissioners."

"I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you."

"I've known it all along,—before you left even. Sir Raffle Buffle had told me he was to go to the Income-tax Office. The chair is two thousand there, you know; and I had been promised the first seat at the Board."

"Ah;—I wish I'd known," said Crosbie.

"You are much better as you are," said Butterwell. "There's no pleasure like a surprise! Besides, one knows a thing of that kind, and yet doesn't know it. I don't mind saying now that I knew it,—swearing that I knew it,—but I wouldn't have said so to a living being the day before yesterday. There are such slips between the cups and the lips. Suppose Sir Raffle had not gone to the Income-tax!"

"Exactly so," said Crosbie.

"But it's all right now. Indeed I sat at the Board yesterday, though I signed the letter afterwards. I'm not sure that I don't lose more than I gain."

"What! with three hundred a year more and less work?"

"Ah, but look at the interest of the thing. The secretary sees everything and knows everything. But I'm getting old, and, as you say, the lighter work will suit me. By the by, will you come down to Putney to-morrow? Mrs. Butterwell will be delighted to see the new secretary. There's nobody in town now, so you can have no ground for refusing."

But Mr. Crosbie did find some ground for refusing. It would have been impossible for him to have sat and smiled at Mrs. Butterwell's table in his present frame of mind. In a mysterious, half-explanatory manner, he let Mr. Butterwell know that private affairs of importance made it absolutely necessary that he should remain that evening in town. "And indeed," as he said, "he was not his own master just at present."

"By the by,—of course not. I had quite forgotten to congratulate you on that head. So you're going to be married? Well; I'm very glad, and hope you'll be as lucky as I have been."

"Thank you," said Crosbie, again rather gloomily.

"A young lady from near Guestwick, isn't it; or somewhere in those parts?"

"N——no," stammered Crosbie. "The lady comes from Barsetshire."

"Why, I heard the name. Isn't she a Bell, or Tait, or Ball, or some such name as that?"

"No," said Crosbie, assuming what boldness he could command. "Her name is De Courcy."

"One of the earl's daughters?"

"Yes," said Crosbie.

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I'd heard wrong. You're going to be allied to a very noble family, and I am heartily glad to hear of your success in life." Then Butterwell shook him very cordially by the hand,—having offered him no such special testimony of approval when under the belief that he was going to marry a Bell, a Tait, or a Ball. All the same, Mr. Butterwell began to think that there was something wrong. He had heard from an indubitable source that Crosbie had engaged himself to a

niece of a squire with whom he had been staying near Guestwick,—a girl without any money; and Mr. Butterwell, in his wisdom, had thought his friend Crosbie to be rather a fool for his pains. But now he was going to marry one of the De Courseys! Mr. Butterwell was rather at his wits' ends.

"Well; we shall be sitting at two, you know, and of course you'll come to us. If you're at leisure before that I'll make over what papers I have to you. I've not been a Lord Eldon in my office, and they won't break your back."

Immediately after that Fowler Pratt had been shown into Crosbie's room, and Crosbie had written the letter to the squire under Pratt's eye.

He could take no joy in his promotion. When Pratt left him he tried to lighten his heart. He endeavoured to throw Lily and her wrongs behind him, and fix his thoughts on his advancing successes in life; but he could not do it. A self-imposed trouble will not allow itself to be banished. If a man lose a thousand pounds by a friend's fault, or by a turn in the wheel of fortune, he can, if he be a man, put his grief down and trample it under foot; he can exorcise the spirit of his grievance, and bid the evil one depart from out of his house. But such exorcism is not to be used when the sorrow has come from a man's own folly and sin;—especially not if it has come from his own selfishness. Such are the cases which make men drink; which drive them on to the avoidance of all thought; which create gamblers and reckless prodigals; which are the promoters of suicide. How could he avoid writing this letter to Lily? He might blow his brains out, and so let there be an end of it all. It was to such reflections that he came, when he sat himself down endeavouring to reap satisfaction from his promotion.

But Crosbie was not a man to commit suicide. In giving him his due I must protest that he was too good for that. He knew too well that a pistol-bullet could not be the be-all and the end-all here, and there was too much manliness in him for so cowardly an escape. The burden must be borne. But how was he to bear it? There he sat till it was two o'clock, neglecting Mr. Butterwell and his office papers, and not stirring from his seat till a messenger summoned him before the Board. The Board, as he entered the room, was not such a Board as the public may, perhaps, imagine such Boards to be. There was a round table, with a few pens lying about, and a comfortable leathern arm-chair at the side of it, farthest from the door. Sir Raffle Buffle was leaving his late colleagues, and was standing with his back to the fire-place, talking very loudly. Sir Raffle was a great bully, and the Board was uncommonly glad to be rid of him; but as this was to be his last appearance at the Committee Office, they submitted to his voice meekly. Mr. Butterwell was standing close to him, essaying to laugh mildly at Sir Raffle's jokes. A little man, hardly more than five feet high, with small but honest-looking eyes, and close-cut hair, was standing behind the arm-chair, rubbing his hands together, and longing for the departure of Sir Raffle,

in order that he might sit down. This was Mr. Optimist, the new chairman, in praise of whose appointment the Daily Jupiter had been so loud, declaring that the present Minister was showing himself superior to all Ministers who had ever gone before him, in giving promotion solely on the score of merit. The Daily Jupiter, a fortnight since, had published a very eloquent article, strongly advocating the claims of Mr. Optimist, and was naturally pleased to find that its advice had been taken. Has not an obedient Minister a right to the praise of those powers which he obeys?

Mr. Optimist was, in truth, an industrious little gentleman, very well connected, who had served the public all his life, and who was, at any rate, honest in his dealings. Nor was he a bully, such as his predecessor. It might, however, be a question whether he carried guns enough for the command in which he was now to be employed. There was but one other member of the Board, Major Fiasco by name, a discontented, broken-hearted, silent man, who had been sent to the General Committee Office some few years before because he was not wanted anywhere else. He was a man who had intended to do great things when he entered public life, and had possessed the talent and energy for things moderately great. He had also possessed to a certain extent the ear of those high in office; but, in some way, matters had not gone well with him, and in running his course he had gone on the wrong side of the post. He was still in the prime of life, and yet all men knew that Major Fiasco had nothing further to expect from the public or from the Government. Indeed, there were not wanting those who said that Major Fiasco was already in receipt of a liberal income, for which he gave no work in return; that he merely filled a chair for four hours a day four or five days a week, signing his name to certain forms and documents, reading, or pretending to read, certain papers, but, in truth, doing no good. Major Fiasco, on the other hand, considered himself to be a deeply injured individual, and he spent his life in brooding over his wrongs. He believed now in nothing and in nobody. He had begun public life striving to be honest, and he now regarded all around him as dishonest. He had no satisfaction in any man other than that which he found when some event would show to him that this or that other compeer of his own had proved himself to be self-interested, false, or fraudulent. "Don't tell me, Butterwell," he would say—for with Mr. Butterwell he maintained some semi-official intimacy, and he would take that gentleman by the button-hole, holding him close. "Don't tell me. I know what men are. I've seen the world. I've been looking at things with my eyes open. I knew what he was doing." And then he would tell of the sly deed of some official known well to them both, not denouncing it by any means, but affecting to take it for granted that the man in question was a rogue. Butterwell would shrug his shoulders, and laugh gently, and say that, upon his word, he didn't think the world so bad as Fiasco made it out to be.

Nor did he; for Butterwell believed in many things. He believed in his Putney villa on this earth, and he believed also that he might achieve some sort of Putney villa in the world beyond without undergoing present martyrdom. His Putney villa first, with all its attendant comforts, and then his duty to the public afterwards. It was thus that Mr. Butterwell regulated his conduct; and as he was solicitous that the villa should be as comfortable a home to his wife as to himself, and that it should be specially comfortable to his friends, I do not think that we need quarrel with his creed.

Mr. Optimist believed in everything, but especially he believed in the Prime Minister, in the Daily Jupiter, in the General Committee Office, and in himself. He had long thought that everything was nearly right; but now that he himself was chairman at the General Committee Office, he was quite sure that everything must be right. In Sir Raffle Buffle, indeed, he had never believed; and now it was, perhaps, the greatest joy of his life that he should never again be called upon to hear the tones of that terrible knight's hated voice.

Seeing who were the components of the new Board, it may be presumed that Crosbie would look forward to enjoying a not uninfluential position in his office. There were, indeed, some among the clerks who did not hesitate to say that the new secretary would have it pretty nearly all his own way. As for "old Opt," there would be, they said, no difficulty about him. Only tell him that such and such a decision was his own, and he would be sure to believe the teller. Butterwell was not fond of work, and had been accustomed to lean upon Crosbie for many years. As for Fiasco, he would be cynical in words, but wholly indifferent in deed. If the whole office were made to go to the mischief, Fiasco, in his own grim way, would enjoy the confusion.

"Wish you joy, Crosbie," said Sir Raffle, standing up on the rug, waiting for the new secretary to go up to him and shake hands. But Sir Raffle was going, and the new secretary did not indulge him.

"Thank ye, Sir Raffle," said Crosbie, without going near the rug.

"Mr. Crosbie, I congratulate you most sincerely," said Mr. Optimist. "Your promotion has been the result altogether of your own merit. You have been selected for the high office which you are now called upon to fill solely because it has been thought that you are the most fit man to perform the onerous duties attached to it. Hum—h-m—ha. As regards my share in the recommendation which we found ourselves bound to submit to the Treasury, I must say that I never felt less hesitation in my life, and I believe I may declare as much as regards the other members of the Board."

And Mr. Optimist looked around him for approving words. He had come forward from his standing ground behind his chair to welcome Crosbie, and had shaken his hand cordially. Fiasco also had risen from his seat, and had assured Crosbie in a whisper that he had feathered his nest uncommon well. Then he had sat down again.

"Indeed you may, as far as I am concerned," said Butterwell.

"I told the Chancellor of the Exchequer," said Sir Raffle, speaking very loud and with much authority, "that unless he had some first-rate man to send from elsewhere I could name a fitting candidate. 'Sir Raffle,' he said, 'I mean to keep it in the office, and therefore shall be glad of your opinion.' In that case, Mr. Chancellor,' said I, 'Mr. Crosbie must be the man.' 'Mr. Crosbie shall be the man,' said the Chancellor. And Mr. Crosbie is the man."

"Your friend Sark spoke to Lord Brock about it," said Fiasco. Now the Earl of Sark was a young nobleman of much influence at the present moment, and Lord Brock was the Prime Minister. "You should thank Lrd Sark."

"Had as much to do with it as if my footman had spoken," said Sir Raffle.

"I am very much obliged to the Board for their good opinion," said Crosbie, gravely. "I am obliged to Lord Sark as well,—and also to your footman, Sir Raffle, if, as you seem to say, he has interested himself in my favour."

"I didn't say anything of the kind," said Sir Raffle. "I thought it right to make you understand that it was my opinion, given, of course, officially, which prevailed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Well, gentlemen, as I shall be wanted in the city, I will say good morning to you. Is my carriage ready, Beggs?" Upon which the attendant messenger opened the door, and the great Sir Raffle Buffle took his final departure from the scene of his former labours.

"As to the duties of your new office"—and Mr. Optimist continued his speech, taking no other notice of the departure of his enemy than what was indicated by an increased brightness of his eye and a more satisfactory tone of voice—"you will find yourself quite familiar with them."

"Indeed he will," said Butterwell.

"And I am quite sure that you will perform them with equal credit to yourself, satisfaction to the department, and advantage to the public. We shall always be glad to have your opinion on any subject of importance that may come before us; and as regards the internal discipline of the office, we feel that we may leave it safely in your hands. In any matter of importance you will, of course, consult us, and I feel very confident that we shall go on together with great comfort and with mutual confidence." Then Mr. Optimist looked at his brother commissioners, sat down in his arm-chair, and taking in his hands some papers before him, began the routine business of the day.

It was nearly five o'clock when, on this special occasion, the secretary returned from the board-room to his own office. Not for a moment had the weight been off his shoulders while Sir Raffle had been bragging or Mr. Optimist making his speech. He had been thinking, not of them, but of Lily Dale; and though they had not discovered his thoughts, they had perceived that he was hardly like himself.

"I never saw a man so little elated by good fortune in my life," said Mr. Optimist.

"Ah, he's got something on his mind," said Butterwell. "He's going to be married, I believe."

"If that's the case, it's no wonder he shouldn't be elated," said Major Fiasco, who was himself a bachelor.

When in his own room again Crosbie at once seized on a sheet of note-paper, as though by hurrying himself on with it he could get that letter to Allington written. But though the paper was before him, and the pen in his hand, the letter did not, would not, get itself written. With what words was he to begin it? To whom should it be written? How was he to declare himself the villain which he had made himself? The letters from his office were taken away every night shortly after six, and at six o'clock he had not written a word. "I will do it at home, to-night," he said to himself, and then, tearing off a scrap of paper, he scratched those few lines which Lily received, and which she had declined to communicate to her mother or sister. Crosbie, as he wrote them, conceived that they would in some way prepare the poor girl for the coming blow,—that they would, at any rate, make her know that all was not right; but in so supposing he had not counted on the constancy of her nature, nor had he thought of the promise which she had given him that nothing should make her doubt him. He wrote the scrap, and then taking his hat walked off through the gloom of the November evening up Charing Cross and St. Martin's Lane, towards the Seven Dials and Bloomsbury, into regions of the town with which he had no business, and which he never frequented. He hardly knew where he went or wherefore. How was he to escape from the weight of the burden which was now crushing him? It seemed to him as though he would change his position with thankfulness for that of the junior clerk in his office, if only that junior clerk had upon his mind no such betrayal of trust as that of which he was guilty.

At half-past seven he found himself at Sebright's, and there he dined. A man will dine, even though his heart be breaking. Then he got into a cab, and had himself taken home to Mount Street. During his walk he had sworn to himself that he would not go to bed that night till the letter was written and posted. It was twelve before the first words were marked on the paper, and yet he kept his oath. Between two and three, in the cold moonlight, he crawled out and deposited his letter in the nearest post-office.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JOHN EAMES RETURNS TO BURTON CRESCENT.

JOHN EAMES and Crosbie returned to town on the same day. It will be remembered how Eames had assisted Lord De Guest in the matter of the bull, and how great had been the earl's gratitude on the occasion. The

memory of this, and the strong encouragement which he received from his mother and sister for having made such a friend by his gallantry, lent some slight satisfaction to his last hours at home. But his two misfortunes were too serious to allow of anything like real happiness. He was leaving Lily behind him, engaged to be married to a man whom he hated, and he was returning to Burton Crescent, where he would have to face Amelia Roper,—Amelia either in her rage or in her love. The prospect of Amelia in her rage was very terrible to him; but his greatest fear was of Amelia in her love. He had in his letter declined matrimony; but what if she talked down all his objections, and carried him off to church in spite of himself!

When he reached London and got into a cab with his portmanteau, he could hardly fetch up courage to bid the man drive him to Burton Crescent. "I might as well go to an hotel for the night," he said to himself, "and then I can learn how things are going on from Cradell at the office." Nevertheless, he did give the direction to Burton Crescent, and when it was once given felt ashamed to change it. But, as he was driven up to the well-known door, his heart was so low within him that he might almost be said to have lost it. When the cabman demanded whether he should knock, he could not answer; and when the maid-servant at the door greeted him, he almost ran away.

"Who's at home?" said he, asking the question in a very low voice.

"There's missus," said the girl, "and Miss Spruce, and Mrs. Lupex. He's away somewhere, in his tantrums again; and there's Mr. ——"

"Is Miss Roper here?" he said, still whispering.

"Oh, yes! Miss Mealyer's here," said the girl, speaking in a cruelly loud voice. "She was in the dining-room just now, putting out the table. Miss Mealyer!" And the girl, as she called out the name, opened the dining-room door. Johnny Eames felt that his knees were too weak to support him.

But Miss Mealyer was not in the dining-room. She had perceived the advancing cab of her sworn adorer, and had thought it expedient to retreat from her domestic duties, and fortify herself among her brushes and ribbons. Had it been possible that she should know how very weak and cowardly was the enemy against whom she was called upon to put herself in action, she might probably have fought her battle somewhat differently, and have achieved a speedy victory, at the cost of an energetic shot or two. But she did not know. She thought it probable that she might obtain power over him and manage him; but it did not occur to her that his legs were so weak beneath him that she might almost blow him over with a breath. None but the worst and most heartless of women know the extent of their own power over men;—as none but the worst and most heartless of men know the extent of their power over women. Amelia Roper was not a good specimen of the female sex, but there were worse women than her.

"She ain't there, Mr. Eames; but you'll see her in the drawen-room,"

said the girl. "And it's she'll be glad to see you back again, Mr. Eames." But he scrupulously passed the door of the upstairs sitting-room, not even looking within it, and contrived to get himself into his own chamber without having encountered anybody. "Here's yer 'ot water, Mr. Eames," said the girl, coming up to him after an interval of half-an-hour; "and dinner'll be on the table in ten minutes. Mr. Cradell is come in, and so is missus's son."

It was still open to him to go out and dine at some eating-house in the Strand. He could start out, leaving word that he was engaged, and so postpone the evil hour. He had almost made up his mind to do so, and certainly would have done it, had not the sitting-room door opened as he was on the landing-place. The door opened, and he found himself confronting the assembled company. First came Cradell, and leaning on his arm, I regret to say, was Mrs. Lupex,—*Egyptia conjux!* Then there came Miss Spruce with young Roper; Amelia and her mother brought up the rear together. There was no longer question of flight now; and poor Eames, before he knew what he was doing, was carried down into the dining-room with the rest of the company. They were all glad to see him, and welcomed him back warmly, but he was so much beside himself that he could not ascertain whether Amelia's voice was joined with the others. He was already seated at table, and had before him a plate of soup, before he recognized the fact that he was sitting between Mrs. Roper and Mrs. Lupex. The latter lady had separated herself from Mr. Cradell as she entered the room. "Under all the circumstances perhaps it will be better for us to be apart," she said. "A lady can't make herself too safe; can she, Mrs. Roper? There's no danger between you and me, is there, Mr. Eames,—especially when Miss Amelia is opposite?" The last words, however, were intended to be whispered into his ear.

But Johnny made no answer to her; contenting himself for the moment with wiping the perspiration from his brow. There was Amelia opposite to him, looking at him—the very Amelia to whom he had written, declining the honour of marrying her. Of what her mood towards him might be, he could form no judgment from her looks. Her face was simply stern and impassive, and she seemed inclined to eat her dinner in silence. A slight smile of derision had passed across her face as she heard Mrs. Lupex whisper, and it might have been discerned that her nose, at the same time, became somewhat elevated; but she said not a word.

"I hope you've enjoyed yourself, Mr. Eames, among the vernal beauties of the country," said Mrs. Lupex.

"Very much, thank you," he replied.

"There's nothing like the country at this autumnal season of the year. As for myself, I've never been accustomed to remain in London after the breaking up of the *beau monde*. We've usually been to Broadstairs, which is a very charming place, with most elegant society, but now—" and she shook her head, by which all the company knew that she intended to allude to the sins of Mr. Lupex.

"I'd never wish to sleep out of London for my part," said Mrs. Roper. "When a woman's got a house over her head, I don't think her mind's ever easy out of it."

She had not intended any reflection on Mrs. Lupex for not having a house of her own, but that lady immediately bristled up. "That's just what the snails say, Mrs. Roper. And as for having a house of one's own, it's a very good thing, no doubt, sometimes; but that's according to circumstances. It has suited me lately to live in lodgings, but there's no knowing whether I mayn't fall lower than that yet, and have——" but here she stopped herself, and looking over at Mr. Cradell nodded her head.

"And have to let them," said Mrs. Roper. "I hope you'll be more lucky with your lodgers than I have been with some of mine. Jemima, hand the potatoes to Miss Spruce. Miss Spruce, do let me send you a little more gravy? There's plenty here, really." Mrs. Roper was probably thinking of Mr. Todgers.

"I hope I shall," said Mrs. Lupex. "But, as I was saying, Broadstairs is delightful. Were you ever at Broadstairs, Mr. Cradell?"

"Never, Mrs. Lupex. I generally go abroad in my leave. One sees more of the world, you know. I was at Dieppe last June, and found that very delightful—though rather lonely. I shall go to Ostend this year; only December is so late for Ostend. It was a deuced shame my getting December, wasn't it, Johnny?"

"Yes, it was," said Eames. "I managed better."

"And what have you been doing, Mr. Eames?" said Mrs. Lupex, with one of her sweetest smiles. "Whatever it may have been, you've not been false to the cause of beauty, I'm sure." And she looked over to Amelia with a knowing smile. But Amelia was engaged upon her plate, and went on with her dinner without turning her eyes either on Mrs. Lupex or on John Eames.

"I haven't done anything particular," said Eames. "I've just been staying with my mother."

"We've been very social here, haven't we, Miss Amelia?" continued Mrs. Lupex. "Only now and then a cloud comes across the heavens, and the lights at the banquet are darkened." Then she put her handkerchief up to her eyes, sobbing deeply, and they all knew that she was again alluding to the sins of her husband.

As soon as dinner was over the ladies with young Mr. Roper retired, and Eames and Cradell were left to take their wine over the dining-room fire,—or their glass of gin and water, as it might be. "Well, Caudle, old fellow," said one. "Well, Johnny, my boy," said the other. "What's the news at the office?" said Eames.

"Muggeridge has been playing the very mischief." Muggeridge was the second clerk in Cradell's room. "We're going to put him into Coventry and not speak to him except officially. But to tell you the truth, my hands have been so full here at home, that I haven't thought much about the office. What am I to do about that woman?"

"Do about her? How do about her?"

"Yes; what am I to do about her? How am I to manage with her? There's Lupex off again in one of his fits of jealousy."

"But it's not your fault, I suppose?"

"Well; I can't just say. I am fond of her, and that's the long and the short of it; denced fond of her."

"But, my dear Caudle, you know she's that man's wife."

"Oh, yes, I know all about it. I'm not going to defend myself. It's wrong, I know,—pleasant, but wrong. But what's a fellow to do? I suppose in strict morality I ought to leave the lodgings. But, by George, I don't see why a man's to be turned out in that way. And then I couldn't make a clean score with old mother Roper. But I say, old fellow, who gave you the gold chain?"

"Well; it was an old family friend at Guestwick; or rather, I should say, a man who said he knew my father."

"And he gave you that because he knew your governor! Is there a watch to it?"

"Yes, there's a watch. It wasn't exactly that. There was some trouble about a bull. To tell the truth, it was Lord De Guest; the queerest fellow, Caudle, you ever met in your life; but such a trump. I've got to go and dine with him at Christmas." And then the old story of the bull was told.

"I wish I could find a lord in a field with a bull," said Cradell. We may, however, be permitted to doubt whether Mr. Cradell would have earned a watch even if he had had his wish.

"You see," continued Cradell, reverting to the subject on which he most delighted to talk, "I'm not responsible for that man's ill-conduct."

"Does anybody say you are?"

"No; nobody says so. But people seem to think so. When he is by I hardly speak to her. She is thoughtless and giddy, as women are, and takes my arm, and that kind of thing, you know. It makes him mad with rage, but upon my honour I don't think she means any harm."

"I don't suppose she does," said Eames.

"Well; she may or she mayn't. I hope with all my heart she doesn't."

"And where is he now?"

"This is between ourselves, you know; but she went to find him this afternoon. Unless he gives her money she can't stay here, nor, for the matter of that, will she be able to go away. If I mention something to you, you won't tell any one?"

"Of course I won't."

"I wouldn't have it known to any one for the world. I've lent her seven pounds ten. It's that which makes me so short with mother Roper."

"Then I think you're a fool for your pains."

"Ah, that's so like you. I always said you'd no feeling of real romance. If I cared for a woman I'd give her the coat off my back."

"I'd do better than that," said Johnny. "I'd give her the heart out of my body. I'd be chopped up alive for a girl I loved; but it shouldn't be for another man's wife."

"That's a matter of taste. But she's been to Lupex to-day at that house he goes to in Drury Lane. She had a terrible scene there. He was going to commit suicide in the middle of the street, and she declares that it all comes from jealousy. Think what a time I have of it—standing always, as one may say, on gunpowder. He may turn up here any moment, you know. But, upon my word, for the life of me I cannot desert her. If I were to turn my back on her she wouldn't have a friend in the world. And how's L. D.? I'll tell you what it is—you'll have some trouble with the divine Amelia."

"Shall I?"

"By Jove, you will. But how's L. D. all this time?"

"L. D. is engaged to be married to a man named Adolphus Crosbie," said poor Johnny, slowly. "If you please, we will not say any more about her."

"Whew—w—w! That's what makes you so down in the mouth! L. D. going to marry Crosbie! Why, that's the man who is to be the new secretary at the General Committee Office. Old Huffle Scuffle, who was their chair, has come to us, you know. There's been a general move at the G. C., and this Crosbie has got to be secretary. He's a lucky chap, isn't he?"

"I don't know anything about his luck. He's one of those fellows that make me hate them the first time I look at them. I've a sort of feeling that I shall live to kick him some day."

"That's the time, is it? Then I suppose Amelia will have it all her own way now."

"I'll tell you what, Caudle. I'd sooner get up through the trap-door, and throw myself off the roof into the area, than marry Amelia Roper."

"Have you and she had any conversation since you came back?"

"Not a word."

"Then I tell you fairly you've got trouble before you. Amelia and Maria—Mrs. Lupex, I mean—are as thick as thieves just at present, and they have been talking you over. Maria—that is, Mrs. Lupex—lets it all out to me. You'll have to mind where you are, old fellow."

Eames was not inclined to discuss the matter any further, so he finished his toddy in silence. Cradell, however, who felt that there was something in his affairs of which he had reason to be proud, soon returned to the story of his own very extraordinary position. "By Jove, I don't know that a man was ever so circumstanced," he said. "She looks to me to protect her, and yet what can I do?"

At last Cradell got up, and declared that he must go to the ladies. "She's so nervous, that unless she has some one to countenance her she becomes unwell."

Eames declared his purpose of going to the divan, or to the theatre,

or to take a walk in the streets. The smiles of beauty had no longer charms for him in Burton Crescent.

"They'll expect you to take a cup of tea the first night," said Cradell; but Eames declared that they might expect it. "I'm in no humour for it," said he. "I'll tell you what, Cradell, I shall leave this place, and take rooms for myself somewhere. I'll never go into a lodging-house again."

As he so spoke, he was standing at the dining-room door; but he was not allowed to escape in this easy way. Jemima, as he went out into the passage, was there with a three-cornered note in her hand. "From Miss Mealyer," she said. "Miss Mealyer is in the back parlour all by herself."

Poor Johnny took the note, and read it by the lamp over the front door.

"Are you not going to speak to me on the day of your return? It cannot be that you will leave the house without seeing me for a moment. I am in the back parlour."

When he had read these words, he paused in the passage, with his hat on. Jemima, who could not understand why any young man should hesitate as to seeing his lady-love in the back parlour alone, whispered to him again, in her audible way, "Miss Mealyer is there, sir; and all the rest on 'em's upstairs!" So compelled, Eames put down his hat, and walked with slow steps into the back parlour.

How was it to be with the enemy? Was he to encounter Amelia in anger, or Amelia in love? She had seemed to be stern and defiant when he had ventured to steal a look at her across the dining-table, and now he expected that she would turn upon him with loud threatenings and protestations as to her wrongs. But it was not so. When he entered the room she was standing with her back to him, leaning on the mantel-piece, and at the first moment she did not essay to speak. He walked into the middle of the room and stood there, waiting for her to begin.

"Shut the door!" she said, looking over her shoulder. "I suppose you don't want the girl to hear all you've got to say to me!"

Then he shut the door; but still Amelia stood with her back to him, leaning upon the mantel-piece.

It did not seem that he had much to say, for he remained perfectly silent.

"Well!" said Amelia, after a long pause, and she then again looked over her shoulder. "Well, Mr. Eames!"

"Jemima gave me your note, and so I've come," said he.

"And is this the way we meet!" she exclaimed, turning suddenly upon him, and throwing her long black hair back over her shoulders. There certainly was some beauty about her. Her eyes were large and bright, and her shoulders were well turned. She might have done as an artist's model for a Judith, but I doubt whether any man, looking well into her face, could think that she would do well as a wife. "Oh, John, is it to be thus, after love such as ours?" And she clasped her hands together, and stood before him.

"I don't know what you mean," said Eames.

"If you are engaged to marry L. D., tell me so at once. Be a man, and speak out, sir."

"No," said Eames; "I am not engaged to marry the lady to whom you allude."

"On your honour?"

"I won't have her spoken about. I'm not going to marry her, and that's enough."

"Do you think that I wish to speak of her? What can L. D. be to me as long as she is nothing to you? Oh, Johnny, why did you write me that heartless letter?" Then she leaned upon his shoulder—or attempted to do so.

I cannot say that Eames shook her off, seeing that he lacked the courage to do so; but he shuffled his shoulder about so that the support was uneasy to her, and she was driven to stand erect again. "Why did you write that cruel letter?" she said again.

"Because I thought it best, Amelia. What's a man to do with ninety pounds a year, you know?"

"But your mother allows you twenty."

"And what's a man to do with a hundred and ten?"

"Rising five pounds every year," said the well-informed Amelia. "Of course we should live here, with mamma, and you would just go on paying her as you do now. If your heart was right, Johnny, you wouldn't think so much about money. If you loved me—as you said you did—" Then a little sob came, and the words were stopped. The words were stopped, but she was again upon his shoulder. What was he to do? In truth, his only wish was to escape, and yet his arm, quite in opposition to his own desires, found its way round her waist. In such a combat a woman has so many points in her favour! "Oh, Johnny," she said again, as soon as she felt the pressure of his arm. "Gracious, what a beautiful watch you've got," and she took the trinket out of his pocket. "Did you buy that?"

"No; it was given to me."

"John Eames, did L. D. give it you?"

"No, no, no," he shouted, stamping on the floor as he spoke.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Amelia, quelled for the moment by his energy. "Perhaps it was your mother."

"No; it was a man. Never mind about the watch now."

"I wouldn't mind anything, Johnny, if you would tell me that you loved me again. Perhaps I oughtn't to ask you, and it isn't becoming in a lady; but how can I help it, when you know you've got my heart. Come upstairs and have tea with us now, won't you?"

What was he to do? He said that he would go up and have tea; and as he led her to the door he put down his face and kissed her. Oh, Johnny Eames! But then a woman in such a contest has so many points in her favour.

CHAPTER XXX.

IS IT FROM HIM?

I HAVE already declared that Crosbie wrote and posted the fatal letter to Allington, and we must now follow it down to that place. On the morning following the squire's return to his own house Mrs. Crump, the post-mistress at Allington, received a parcel by post directed to herself. She opened it, and found an enclosure addressed to Mrs. Dale, with a written request that she would herself deliver it into that lady's own hand at once. This was Crosbie's letter.

"It's from Miss Lily's gentleman," said Mrs. Crump, looking at the handwriting. "There's something up, or he wouldn't be writing to her mamma in this way." But Mrs. Crump lost no time in putting on her bonnet, and trudging up with the letter to the Small House. "I must see the missus herself," said Mrs. Crump. Whereupon Mrs. Dale was called downstairs into the hall, and there received the packet. Lily was in the breakfast-parlour, and had seen the post-mistress arrive;—had seen also that she carried a letter in her hand. For a moment she had thought that it was for her, and imagined that the old woman had brought it herself from simple good-nature. But Lily, when she heard her mother mentioned, instantly withdrew and shut the parlour door. Her heart misgave her that something was wrong, but she hardly tried to think what it might be. After all, the regular postman might bring the letter she herself expected. Bell was not yet downstairs, and she stood alone over the tea-cups on the breakfast-table, feeling that there was something for her to fear. Her mother did not come at once into the room, but, after a pause of a moment or two, went again upstairs. So she remained, either standing against the table, or at the window, or seated in one of the two arm-chairs, for a space of ten minutes, when Bell entered the room.

"Isn't mamma down yet?" said Bell.

"Bell," said Lily; "something has happened. Mamma has got a letter."

"Happened! What has happened? Is anybody ill? Who is the letter from?" And Bell was going to return through the door in search of her mother.

"Stop, Bell," said Lily. "Do not go to her yet. I think it's from—Adolphus."

"Oh, Lily, what do you mean?"

"I don't know, dear. We'll wait a little longer. Don't look like that, Bell." And Lily strove to appear calm, and strove almost successfully.

"You have frightened me so," said Bell.

"I am frightened myself. He only sent me one line yesterday, and now he has sent nothing. If some misfortune should have happened to him! Mrs. Crump brought down the letter herself to mamma, and that is so odd, you know."

"Are you sure it was from him?"

"No; I have not spoken to her. I will go up to her now. Don't you come, Bell. Oh! Bell, do not look so unhappy." She then went over and kissed her sister, and after that, with very gentle steps, made her way up to her mother's room. "Mamma, may I come in?" she said.

"Oh! my child!"

"I know it is from him, mamma. Tell me all at once."

Mrs. Dale had read the letter. With quick, glancing eyes, she had made herself mistress of its whole contents, and was already aware of the nature and extent of the sorrow which had come upon them. It was a sorrow that admitted of no hope. The man who had written that letter could never return again; nor if he should return could he be welcomed back to them. The blow had fallen, and it was to be borne. Inside the letter to herself had been a very small note addressed to Lily. "Give her the enclosed," Crosbie had said in his letter, "if you do not now think it wrong to do so. I have left it open, that you may read it." Mrs. Dale, however, had not yet read it, and she now concealed it beneath her handkerchief.

I will not repeat at length Crosbie's letter to Mrs. Dale. It covered four sides of letter-paper, and was such a letter that any man who wrote it must have felt himself to be a rascal. We saw that he had difficulty in writing it, but the miracle was, that any man could have found it possible to write it. "I know you will curse me," said he; "and I deserve to be cursed. I know that I shall be punished for this, and I must bear my punishment. My worst punishment will be this,—that I never more shall hold up my head again." And then, again, he said:—"My only excuse is my conviction that I should never make her happy. She has been brought up as an angel, with pure thoughts, with holy hopes, with a belief in all that is good, and high, and noble. I have been surrounded through my whole life by things low, and mean, and ignoble. How could I live with her, or she with me? I know now that this is so; but my fault has been that I did not know it when I was there with her. I choose to tell you all," he continued, towards the end of the letter, "and therefore I let you know that I have engaged myself to marry another woman. Ah! I can foresee how bitter will be your feelings when you read this; but they will not be so bitter as mine while I write it. Yes; I am already engaged to one who will suit me, and whom I may suit. You will not expect me to speak ill of her who is to be near and dear to me. But she is one with whom I may mate myself without an inward conviction that I shall destroy all her happiness by doing so. Lilian," he said, "shall always have my prayers; and I trust that she may soon forget, in the love of an honest man, that she ever knew one so dishonest as—Adolphus Crosbie."

Of what like must have been his countenance as he sat writing such words of himself under the ghastly light of his own small, solitary lamp? Had he written his letter at his office, in the daytime, with men coming

in and out of his room, he could hardly have written of himself so plainly. He would have bethought himself that the written words might remain, and be read hereafter by other eyes than those for which they were intended. But, as he sat alone, during the small hours of the night, almost repenting of his sin with true repentance, he declared to himself that he did not care who might read them. They should, at any rate, be true. Now they had been read by her to whom they had been addressed, and the daughter was standing before the mother to hear her doom.

"Tell me all at once," Lily had said; but in what words was her mother to tell her?

"Lily," she said, rising from her seat, and leaving the two letters on the couch; that addressed to the daughter was hidden beneath a handkerchief, but that which she had read she left open and in sight. She took both the girl's hands in hers as she looked into her face, and spoke to her. "Lily, my child!" Then she burst into sobs, and was unable to tell her tale.

"Is it from him, mamma? May I read it? He cannot be——"

"It is from Mr. Crosbie."

"Is he ill, mamma? Tell me at once. If he is ill I will go to him."

"No, my darling, he is not ill. Not yet;—do not read it yet. Oh, Lily! It brings bad news; very bad news."

"Mamma, if he is not in danger, I can read it. Is it bad to him, or only bad to me?"

At this moment the servant knocked, and not waiting for an answer half opened the door.

"If you please, ma'am, Mr. Bernard is below, and wants to speak to you."

"Mr. Bernard! ask Miss Bell to see him."

"Miss Bell is with him, ma'am, but he says that he specially wants to speak to you."

Mrs. Dale felt that she could not leave Lily alone. She could not take the letter away, nor could she leave her child with the letter open.

"I cannot see him," said Mrs. Dale. "Ask him what it is. Tell him I cannot come down just at present." And then the servant went, and Bernard left his message with Bell.

"Bernard," she had said, "do you know of anything? Is there anything wrong about Mr. Crosbie?" Then, in a few words, he told her all, and understanding why his aunt had not come down to him, he went back to the Great House. Bell, almost stupefied by the tidings, seated herself at the table unconsciously, leaning upon her elbows.

"It will kill her," she said to herself. "My Lily, my darling Lily! It will surely kill her."

But the mother was still with the daughter, and the story was still untold.

"Mamma," said Lily, "whatever it is, I must, of course, be made to

know it. I begin to guess the truth. It will pain you to say it. Shall I read the letter?"

Mrs. Dale was astonished at her calmness. It could not be that she had guessed the truth, or she would not stand like that, with tearless eyes and unquelled courage before her.

"You shall read it, but I ought to tell you first. Oh, my child, my own one!" Lily was now leaning against the bed, and her mother was standing over her, caressing her.

"Then tell me," said she. "But I know what it is. He has thought it all over while away from me, and he finds that it must not be as we have supposed. Before he went I offered to release him, and now he knows that he had better accept my offer. Is it so, mamma?" In answer to this Mrs. Dale did not speak, but Lily understood from her signs that it was so.

"He might have written it to me myself," said Lily, very proudly. "Mamma, we will go down to breakfast. He has sent nothing to me, then?"

"There is a note. He bids me read it, but I have not opened it. It is here."

"Give it me," said Lily, almost sternly. "Let me have his last words to me;" and she took the note from her mother's hands.

"Lily," said the note, "your mother will have told you all. Before you read these few words you will know that you have trusted one who was quite untrustworthy. I know that you will hate me.—I cannot even ask you to forgive me. You will let me pray that you may yet be happy.—A. C." She read these few words, still leaning against the bed. Then she got up, and walking to a chair, seated herself with her back to her mother. Mrs. Dale moving silently after her stood over the back of the chair, not daring to speak to her. So she sat for some five minutes, with her eyes fixed upon the open window, and with Crosbie's note in her hand.

"I will not hate him, and I do forgive him," she said at last, struggling to command her voice, and hardly showing that she could not altogether succeed in her attempt. "I may not write to him again, but you shall write and tell him so. Now we will go down to breakfast." And so saying, she got up from her chair.

Mrs. Dale almost feared to speak to her, her composure was so complete, and her manner so stern and fixed. She hardly knew how to offer pity and sympathy, seeing that pity seemed to be so little necessary, and that even sympathy was not demanded. And she could not understand all that Lily had said. What had she meant by the offer to release him? Had there, then, been some quarrel between them before he went? Crosbie had made no such allusion in his letter. But Mrs. Dale did not dare to ask any questions.

"You frighten me, Lily," she said. "Your very calmness frightens me."

"Dear mamma!" and the poor girl absolutely smiled as she embraced her mother. "You need not be frightened by my calmness. I know the truth well. I have been very unfortunate;—very. The brightest hopes of my life are all gone;—and I shall never again see him whom I love beyond all the world!" Then at last she broke down, and wept in her mother's arms.

There was not a word of anger spoken then against him who had done all this. Mrs. Dale felt that she did not dare to speak in anger against him, and words of anger were not likely to come from poor Lily. She, indeed, hitherto did not know the whole of his offence, for she had not read his letter.

"Give it me, mamma," she said at last. "It has to be done sooner or later."

"Not now, Lily. I have told you all,—all that you need know at present."

"Yes; now, mamma," and again that sweet silvery voice became stern. "I will read it now, and there shall be an end." Whereupon Mrs. Dale gave her the letter and she read it in silence. Her mother, though standing somewhat behind her, watched her narrowly as she did so. She was now lying over upon the bed, and the letter was on the pillow, as she propped herself upon her arm. Her tears were running, and ever and again she would stop to dry her eyes. Her sobs too were very audible, but she went on steadily with her reading till she came to the line on which Crosbie told that he had already engaged himself to another woman. Then her mother could see that she paused suddenly, and that a shudder slightly convulsed all her limbs.

"He has been very quick," she said, almost in a whisper; and then she finished the letter. "Tell him, mamma," she said, "that I do forgive him, and I will not hate him. You will tell him that,—from me; will you not?" And then she raised herself from the bed.

Mrs. Dale would give her no such assurance. In her present mood her feelings against Crosbie were of a nature which she herself hardly could understand or analyze. She felt that if he were present she could almost fly at him as would a tigress. She had never hated before as she now hated this man. He was to her a murderer, and worse than a murderer. He had made his way like a wolf into her little fold, and torn her ewe-lamb and left her maimed and mutilated for life. How could a mother forgive such an offence as that, or consent to be the medium through which forgiveness should be expressed?

"You must, mamma; or, if you do not, I shall do so. Remember that I love him. You know what it is to have loved one single man. He has made me very unhappy; I hardly know yet how unhappy. But I have loved him, and do love him. I believe, in my heart, that he still loves me. Where this has been there must not be hatred and unforgiveness."

"I will pray that I may become able to forgive him," said Mrs. Dale.

"But you must write to him those words. Indeed you must, mamma! She bids me tell you that she has forgiven you, and will not hate you. Promise me that!"

"I can make no promise now, Lily. I will think about it, and endeavour to do my duty."

Lily was now seated, and was holding the skirt of her mother's dress.

"Mamma," she said, looking up into her mother's face, "you must be very good to me now; and I must be very good to you. We shall be always together now. I must be your friend and counsellor; and be everything to you, more than ever. I must fall in love with you now;" and she smiled again, and the tears were almost dry upon her cheeks.

At last they went down to the breakfast-room, from which Bell had not moved. Mrs. Dale entered the room first, and Lily followed, hiding herself for a moment behind her mother. Then she came forward boldly, and taking Bell in her arms, clasped her close to her bosom.

"Bell," she said, "he has gone."

"Lily! Lily! Lily!" said Bell, weeping.

"He has gone! We shall talk it over in a few days, and shall know how to do so without losing ourselves in misery. To-day we will say no more about it. I am so thirsty, Bell; do give me my tea;" and she sat herself down at the breakfast-table.

Lily's tea was given to her, and she drank it. Beyond that I cannot say that any of them partook with much heartiness of the meal. They sat there, as they would have sat if no terrible thunderbolt had fallen among them, and no word further was spoken about Crosbie and his conduct. Immediately after breakfast they went into the other room, and Lily, as was her wont, sat herself immediately down to her drawing. Her mother looked at her with wistful eyes, longing to bid her spare herself, but she shrank from interfering with her. For a quarter of an hour Lily sat over her board, with her brush or pencil in her hand, and then she rose up and put it away.

"It is no good pretending," she said. "I am only spoiling the things; but I will be better to-morrow. I'll go away and lie down by myself, mamma." And so she went.

Soon after this Mrs. Dale took her bonnet and went up to the Great House, having received her brother-in-law's message from Bell.

"I know what he has to tell me," she said; "but I might as well go. It will be necessary that we should speak to each other about it." So she walked across the lawn, and up into the hall of the Great House. "Is my brother in the book-room?" she said to one of the maids; and then knocking at the door, went in unannounced.

The squire rose from his arm-chair, and came forward to meet her.

"Mary," he said, "I believe you know it all."

"Yes," she said. "You can read that," and she handed him Crosbie's letter. "How was one to know that any man could be so wicked as that?"

"And she has heard it?" asked the squire. "Is she able to bear it?"

"Wonderfully! She has amazed me by her strength. It frightens me; for I know that a relapse must come. She has never sunk for a moment beneath it. For myself, I feel as though it were her strength that enables me to bear my share of it." And then she described to the squire all that had taken place that morning.

"Poor child!" said the squire. "Poor child! What can we do for her? Would it be good for her to go away for a time? She is a sweet, good, lovely girl, and has deserved better than that. Sorrow and disappointment come to us all; but they are doubly heavy when they come so early."

Mrs. Dale was almost surprised at the amount of sympathy which he showed.

"And what is to be his punishment?" she asked.

"The scorn which men and women will feel for him; those, at least, whose esteem or scorn are matters of concern to any one. I know no other punishment. You would not have Lily's name brought before a tribunal of law?"

"Certainly not that."

"And I will not have Bernard calling him out. Indeed, it would be for nothing; for in these days a man is not expected to fight duels."

"You cannot think that I would wish that."

"What punishment is there, then? I know of none. There are evils which a man may do, and no one can punish him. I know of nothing. I went up to London after him, but he continued to crawl out of my way. What can you do to a rat but keep clear of him?"

Mrs. Dale had felt in her heart that it would be well if Crosbie could be beaten till all his bones were sore. I hardly know whether such should have been a woman's thought, but it was hers. She had no wish that he should be made to fight a duel. In that there would have been much that was wicked, and in her estimation nothing that was just. But she felt that if Bernard would thrash the coward for his cowardice she would love her nephew better than ever she had loved him. Bernard also had considered it probable that he might be expected to horsewhip the man who had jilted his cousin, and, as regarded the absolute bodily risk, he would not have felt any insuperable objection to undertake the task. But such a piece of work was disagreeable to him in many ways. He hated the idea of a row at his club. He was most desirous that his cousin's name should not be made public. He wished to avoid anything that might be impolitic. A wicked thing had been done, and he was quite ready to hate Crosbie as Crosbie ought to be hated; but as regarded himself, it made him unhappy to think that the world might probably expect him to punish the man who had so lately been his friend. And then he did not know where to catch him, or how to thrash him when caught. He was very sorry for his cousin, and felt strongly that Crosbie should not be allowed to escape. But what was he to do?

"Would she like to go anywhere?" said the squire again, anxious, if he could, to afford solace by some act of generosity. At this moment he would have settled a hundred a year for life upon his niece if by so doing he could have done her any good.

"She will be better at home," said Mrs. Dale. "Poor thing. For a while she will wish to avoid going out."

"I suppose so," and then there was a pause. "I'll tell you what, Mary; I don't understand it. On my honour I don't understand it. It is to me as wonderful as though I had caught the man picking my pence out of my pocket. I don't think any man in the position of gentleman would have done such a thing when I was young. I don't think any man would have dared to do it. But now it seems that a man may act in that way and no harm come to him. He had a friend in London who came to me and talked about it as though it were some ordinary, everyday transaction of life. Yes; you may come in, Bernard. The poor child knows it all now."

Bernard offered to his aunt what of solace and sympathy he had to offer, and made some sort of half-expressed apology for having introduced this wolf into their flock. "We always thought very much of him at his club," said Bernard.

"I don't know much about your London clubs now-a-days," said his uncle, "nor do I wish to do so if the society of that man can be endured after what he has now done."

"I don't suppose half-a-dozen men will ever know anything about it," said Bernard.

"Umph!" ejaculated the squire. He could not say that he wished Crosbie's villainy to be widely discussed, seeing that Lily's name was so closely connected with it. But yet he could not support the idea that Crosbie should not be punished by the frown of the world at large. It seemed to him that from this time forward any man speaking to Crosbie should be held to have disgraced himself by so doing.

"Give her my best love," he said, as Mrs. Dale got up to take her leave; "my very best love. If her old uncle can do anything for her she has only to let me know. She met the man in my house, and I feel that I owe her much. Bid her come and see me. It will be better for her than moping at home. And Mary"—this he said to her, whispering into her ear—"think of what I said to you about Bell."

Mrs. Dale, as she walked back to her own house, acknowledged to herself that her brother-in-law's manner was different to her from anything that she had hitherto known of him.

During the whole of that day Crosbie's name was not mentioned at the Small House. Neither of the girls stirred out, and Bell spent the greater part of the afternoon sitting, with her arm round her sister's waist, upon the sofa. Each of them had a book; but though there was little spoken, there was as little read. Who can describe the thoughts that were passing through Lily's mind as she remembered the hours which she had

passed with Crosbie, of his warm assurances of love, of his accepted caresses, of her uncontrolled and acknowledged joy in his affection? It had all been holy to her then; and now those things which were then sacred had been made almost disgraceful by his fault. And yet as she thought of this she declared to herself over and over again that she would forgive him;—nay, that she had forgiven him. “And he shall know it, too,” she said, speaking almost out loud.

“Lily, dear Lily,” said Bell, “turn your thoughts away from it for a while, if you can.”

“They won’t go away,” said Lily. And that was all that was said between them on the subject.

Everybody would know it! I doubt whether that must not be one of the bitterest drops in the cup which a girl in such circumstances is made to drain. Lily perceived early in the day that the parlour-maid well knew that she had been jilted. The girl’s manner was intended to convey sympathy; but it did convey pity; and Lily for a moment felt angry. But she remembered that it must be so, and smiled upon the girl, and spoke kindly to her. What mattered it? All the world would know it in a day or two.

On the following day she went up, by her mother’s advice, to see her uncle.

“My child,” said he, “I am sorry for you. My heart bleeds for you.”

“Uncle,” she said, “do not mind it. Only do this for me,—do not talk about it,—I mean to me.”

“No, no; I will not. That there should ever have been in my house so great a rascal——”

“Uncle! uncle! I will not have that! I will not listen to a word against him from any human being,—not a word! Remember that!” And her eyes flashed as she spoke.

He did not answer her, but took her hand and pressed it, and then she left him. “The Dales were ever constant!” he said to himself, as he walked up and down the terrace before his house. “Ever constant!”

On the Future Extinction of Blue Eyes.

To the many fervent admirers of blue eyes the possibility, nay, the probability, of black eyes one day having undivided empire cannot be a pleasant suggestion. Even those who loudly proclaim the superior splendour of dark eyes may hear of such a prophecy with misgiving. Tastes, we know, admit of no dispute, and we also know how incessantly they are disputed. On the colour of hair and eyes the dispute is animated. Yet Nature, in spite of a seeming impartiality in her acts, has a decided preference for black ; and, if we are to trust a physiologist, has decreed their ultimate empire, if not the final extinction of the blue. This is not pleasant news. Let us hope it is not true. Even as a variety—apart from the preferences of individuals—one would like to preserve all the shades of blonde hair (except, perhaps, the *whitey-brown*), and all the tints of grey or blue eyes. Without whispering a word of treason against the lustrous splendour of black, we may own the magical thrill which responds to the tender violet, or the thoughtful grey. And if what we have to announce be true, if Nature really carries out her threat, and extinguishes the fair complexions, we must pity our remote descendants ; in spite of their rich inheritance of civilization which will make them regard us as beggarly pioneers, they will have the drawback of living under the dynasty of universal black : *monarchia monochromatica!* Such is the conclusion we draw from the facts recorded by Dr. Bergholz of Venezuela, in the *Archiv für Anatomie*. They are interesting enough to be laid before our readers.

Observations of a loose empirical kind have more than once been directed to the gradual diminution of blue eyes in certain districts, where formerly they had been abundant ; but such observations, even if accurately tabulated, and not merely relying on the approximative estimates of casual remark, would be of small value, so long as they were insulated from the probable causes of such diminution. So many causes might co-operate in such a result, that unless this result were directly and exclusively connected with some one known cause, it would remain an unfruitful remark. Before any proposition respecting the future fate of fair complexions can wear a scientific aspect, it must base itself on the proved facts of physiological inheritance. That we do inherit from our parents and ancestors every physical peculiarity we exhibit, is a fact now beyond dispute.

In all thinking minds it is now firmly fixed, that nothing occurs in this world "by accident;" everything issues from inexorable law. However strange and seemingly capricious may be the forms and features of men, their dispositions and their aptitudes, however widely children of the

same nursery may differ among each other, not one of these peculiarities on which the differences rest, but owes its origin to the law of inheritance. From parents, from grandparents, from the race, and from the primeval stock, there flow streams of influence which determine, by a composition of forces, every detail of feature, every degree of talent, every predisposition to disease, and which mould the plastic organism into its individuality. These influences may be too complex and subtle to be uniformly appreciated; but they exist; they are inevitable; they are more or less appreciable. The discovery of the laws of inheritance is the problem for future science. At present we have only been able to discover that the laws exist, and to collect some of their manifestations in particular directions.

Here, then, we have a scientific basis. If all our physical peculiarities are inherited—if they all come to us from our parents and ancestors, sometimes obviously from the father, sometimes obviously from the mother, and sometimes obviously from the mingling of both—clearly the peculiarity of our complexions affords a striking illustration of the general law, all the more conspicuous and less liable to dispute because the facts are more easily recognizable. Whether a child has inherited the features, moral or physical, of one parent will often be disputable, because the appreciation of such features may be equivocal; but there can be no dispute as to whether the eyes are dark or light. Once agree as to the terms of the definition, and declare that by dark hair we exclude all shades of brown, and by dark eyes we exclude all shades of blue or grey, and the facts admit of no equivoque.

Hence the investigations of Dr. Bergholz have a peculiar value; and had they been more extensive, would have furnished very striking results: but as they are they point to curious reflections, one of these being the inevitable disappearance of blue eyes at some future date.

For the sake of compendious brevity, we shall reduce the results of Dr. Bergholz's researches under these two classes: A, in which the fathers were dark, and the mothers fair; B, in which the fathers were fair, and the mothers dark.

A. Fourteen families were examined in this class. They numbered forty-eight children. Of these forty-eight, there were twenty-nine with dark eyes, and only twenty-one with dark hair. This seeming discrepancy is owing to two causes: one being the curious fact that, on an average, the influence of the father predominates in the colour of the eyes, while the mother's influence predominates in the hair; the other cause being that hair, which ultimately becomes black, is, in childhood, often brown. Taking the colour of the eyes, as the least variable standard, we see twenty-nine out of forty-eight are dark.

B. Nine families were examined in this class; but even here, although the mothers were dark, the proportion is in favour of dark eyes. They had thirty-seven children; of these, twenty-one had dark eyes and seventeen dark hair.

Thus, out of eighty-five children issuing from contrasted parents, the

predominance of the dark over the fair is in the ratio of one hundred to seventy. So marked a predominance must, the author thinks, in time ultimately extinguish the fair. Intermarry how they will, the swarthy parents will gradually extend their hereditary predominance. It is no objection to such a conclusion that dark parents occasionally have blonde children; for blonde parents also occasionally have dark children.

With reference to the distribution of colour between the sexes, Class A gives twenty-eight sons and twenty daughters; Class B, twenty sons and seventeen daughters, thus divided :—

<i>A. Dark Hair.</i>		<i>Dark Eyes.</i>		<i>B. Dark Hair.</i>		<i>Dark Eyes.</i>	
Sons	13		16	Sons	6		11
Daughters	8		13	Daughters	11		10
	—		—		—		—
	21		29		17		21
<i>Light Hair.</i>		<i>Light Eyes.</i>		<i>Light Hair.</i>		<i>Light Eyes.</i>	
Sons	15		12	Sons	12		8
Daughters	12		7	Daughters	8		7
	—		—		—		—
	27		19		20		15

Now, although it would require a far more extensive induction to warrant our author's conclusion, yet, as a beginning, these figures are interesting. They show, moreover, a slight predominance of the male over the female influence.

This result must not too hastily be generalized; a more extensive induction might show that what here seems due to the influence of sex was due to other causes. Those who have studied the laws of inheritance are far from unanimous respecting the influences of sex; indeed, opinions diametrically opposite each show an array of striking facts. Popular prejudice, indeed, attributes to mothers the predominating influence in the production of genius; as we see in the dictum, that "all remarkable men have remarkable mothers." This is somewhat in accordance with Dryden's couplet :—

No father can infuse or wit or grace;
A mother comes across, and mars the race;

which is only partially true, and helps to explain why the children of great men are not often great; but the couplet would be equally true if the relative positions of father and mother were transposed. The fact is that both parents influence the offspring, and therefore either parent may mar the transmission of genius. With regard to the colour of hair and eyes, however, it seems that there is a predominating tendency in favour of the dark, and small as this is—one hundred to seventy—in course of time it must end in the final extinction of the fair. Happily, that time is immensely remote.

Eugénie de Guérin.

Who that had spoken of Maurice de Guérin could refrain from speaking of his sister Eugénie, the most devoted of sisters, one of the rarest and most beautiful of souls? "There is nothing fixed, no duration, no vitality in the sentiments of women towards one another; their attachments are mere pretty bows of ribbon, and no more. In all the friendships of women I observe this slightness of the tie. I know no instance to the contrary, even in history. Orestes and Pylades have no sisters." So she speaks of the friendships of her own sex. But Electra can attach herself to Orestes, if not to Chrysothemis. And to her brother Maurice Eugénie de Guérin was Pylades and Electra in one.

The name of Maurice de Guérin,—that young man so gifted, so attractive, so careless of fame, and so early snatched away; who died at 29; who, says his sister, "let what he did be lost with a carelessness so unjust to himself, set no value on any of his own productions, and departed hence without reaping the rich harvest which seemed his due;" who, in spite of his immaturity, in spite of his fragility, exercised such a charm, "furnished to others so much of that which all live by," that some years after his death his sister found in a country house where he used to stay, in the journal of a young girl who had not known him, but who heard her family speak of him, his name, the date of his death, and these words, "*il était leur vie* (he was their life);" whose talent, exquisite as that of Keats, with less of sunlight, abundance, and facility in it than that of Keats, but with more of distinction and power, had "that winning, delicate, and beautifully happy turn of expression" which is the stamp of the master,—is beginning to be well known to all lovers of literature. This establishment of Maurice's name was an object for which his sister Eugénie passionately laboured. While he was alive, she placed her whole joy in the flowering of this gifted nature; when he was dead, she had no other thought than to make the world know him as she knew him. She outlived him nine years, and her cherished task for those years was to rescue the fragments of her brother's composition, to collect them, to get them published. In pursuing this task she had at first cheering hopes of success; she had at last baffling and bitter disappointment. Her earthly business was at an end; she died. Ten years afterwards, it was permitted to the love of a friend, M. Trébutien, to accomplish for Maurice's memory what the love of a sister had failed to accomplish. But those who read, with delight and admiration, the journal and letters of Maurice de Guérin, could not but be attracted and touched by this sister Eugénie, who met them at every page. She seemed hardly less gifted, hardly less interesting,

than Maurice himself. And now M. Trébutien has done for the sister what he had done for the brother. He has published the journal of Mdlle. Eugénie de Guérin, and a few (too few, alas!) of her letters. The book has made a profound impression in France; and the fame which she sought only for her brother now crowns the sister also.

Parts of Mdlle. de Guérin's journal were several years ago printed for private circulation, and a writer in the *National Review* had the good fortune to fall in with them. The bees of our English criticism do not often roam so far afield for their honey, and this critic deserves thanks for having flitted in his quest of blossom to foreign parts, and for having settled upon a beautiful flower found there. He had the discernment to see that Mdlle. de Guérin was well worth speaking of, and he spoke of her with feeling and appreciation. But that, as I have said, was several years ago; even a true and feeling homage needs to be from time to time renewed, if the memory of its object is to endure; and criticism must not lose an occasion like the present, when Mdlle. de Guérin's journal is for the first time published to the world, of directing notice once more to this religious and beautiful character.

Eugénie de Guérin was born in 1805, at the château of Le Cayla, in Languedoc. Her family, though reduced in circumstances, was noble; and even when one is a saint one cannot quite forget that one comes of the stock of the Guarini of Italy, or that one counts among one's ancestors a Bishop of Senlis, who had the marshalling of the French order of battle on the day of Bouvines. Le Cayla was a solitary place, with its terrace looking down upon stream-bed and valley; "one may pass days there without seeing any living thing but the sheep, without hearing any living thing but the birds." M. de Guérin, Eugénie's father, lost his wife when Eugénie was thirteen years old, and Maurice seven; he was left with four children, Eugénie, Marie, Erembert, and Maurice—of whom Eugénie was the eldest, and Maurice was the youngest. This youngest child, whose beauty and delicacy had made him the object of his mother's most anxious fondness, was commended by her in dying to the care of his sister Eugénie. Maurice at eleven years old went to school at Toulouse; then he went to the Collège Stanislas at Paris; then he became a member of a religious society, which M. de Lamennais had formed at La Chênaie in Brittany; afterwards he lived chiefly at Paris, returning to Le Cayla at the age of 29, to die. Distance, in those days, was a great obstacle to frequent meetings of the separated members of a French family of narrow means. Maurice de Guérin was seldom at Le Cayla after he had once quitted it, though his few visits to his home were long ones; but he passed five years—the period of his sojourn in Brittany, and of his first settlement in Paris—without coming home at all. In spite of the check from these absences, in spite of the more serious check from a temporary alteration in Maurice's religious feelings, the union between the brother and sister was wonderfully close and firm. For they were knit together, not only by the tie of blood and early attachment, but also by the tie of a common

genius. "We were," says Eugénie, "two eyes looking out of one forehead." She on her part brought to her love for her brother the devotedness of a woman, the intensity of a recluse, almost the solicitude of a mother. Her home duties prevented her from following the wish, which often arose in her, to join a religious sisterhood. There is a trace—just a trace—of an early attachment to a cousin; but he died when she was twenty-four. After that, she lived for Maurice. It was for Maurice that, in addition to her constant correspondence with him by letter, she began in 1834 her journal, which was sent to him by portions as it was finished. After his death she tried to continue it, addressing it "to Maurice in Heaven." But the effort was beyond her strength; gradually the entries become rarer and rarer; and, on the last day of December, 1840, the pen dropped from her hand: the journal ends.

Other sisters have loved their brothers, and it is not her affection for Maurice, admirable as this was, which alone could have made Eugénie de Guérin celebrated. I have said that both brother and sister had genius: M. Sainte Beuve goes so far as to say that the sister's genius was equal, if not superior, to her brother's. No one has a more profound respect for M. Sainte Beuve's critical judgments than I have; but it seems to me that this particular judgment needs to be a little explained and guarded. In Maurice's special talent, which was a talent for interpreting nature, for finding words which incomparably render the subtlest impressions which nature makes upon us, which bring the intimate life of nature wonderfully near to us, it seems to me that his sister was by no means his equal. She never, indeed, expresses herself without grace and intelligence; but her words, when she speaks of the life and appearances of nature, are in general but intellectual signs; they are not like her brother's—symbols equivalent with the thing symbolized. They bring the notion of the thing described to the mind, they do not bring the feeling of it to the imagination. Writing from the Nivernais—that region of vast woodlands in the centre of France—"It does one good," says Eugénie, "to be going about in the midst of this enchanting nature, with flowers, birds, and verdure all round one, under this large and blue sky of the Nivernais. How I love the gracious form of it, and those little white clouds here and there, like cushions of cotton, hung aloft to rest the eye in this immensity!" It is pretty and graceful, but how different from the grave and pregnant strokes of Maurice's pencil! "I have been along the Loire, and seen on its banks the plains where nature is puissant and gay; I have seen royal and antique dwellings, all marked by memories which have their place in the mournful legend of humanity—Chambord, Blois, Amboise, Chenonceaux; then the towns on the two banks of the river—Orleans, Tours, Saumur, Nantes; and, at the end of it all, the Ocean rumbling. From these I passed back into the interior of the country, as far as Bourges and Nevers, a region of vast woodlands, in which murmurs of an immense range and fulness" (*ce beau torrent de rumeurs*, as, with an expression worthy of Wordsworth, he elsewhere calls

them) "prevail and never cease." Words whose charm is like that of the sounds of the murmuring forest itself, and whose reverberations, like theirs, die away in the infinite distance of the soul.

Maurice's life was in the life of nature, and the passion for it consumed him; it would have been strange if his accent had not caught more of the soul of nature than Eugénie's accent, whose life was elsewhere. "You will find in him," Maurice says to his sister of a friend whom he was recommending to her, "you will find in him that which you love, and which suits you better than anything else—*l'onction, l'effusion, la mysticité*." Unction, the pouring out of the soul, the rapture of the mystic, were dear to Maurice also; but in him the bent of his genius gave even to those a special direction of its own. In Eugénie they took the direction most native and familiar to them; their object was the religious life.

And yet, if one analyzes this beautiful and most interesting character quite to the bottom, it is not exactly as a saint that Eugénie de Guérin is remarkable. The ideal saint is a nature like Saint François de Sales or Fénelon; a nature of ineffable sweetness and serenity, a nature in which struggle and revolt is over, and the whole man (so far as is possible to human infirmity) swallowed up in love. Saint Therese (it is Mlle. de Guérin herself who reminds us of it) endured twenty years of unacceptance and repulse in her prayers; yes, but the Saint Theresa whom Christendom knows is Saint Theresa repulsed no longer; it is Saint Theresa accepted, rejoicing in love, radiant with ecstasy. Mlle. de Guérin is not one of these saints arrived at perfect sweetness and calm, steeped in ecstasy; there is something primitive, indomitable in her, which she governs, indeed, but which chafes, which revolts; somewhere in the depths of that strong nature there is a struggle, an impatience, an inquietude, an ennui, which endures to the end, and which leaves one, when one finally closes her journal, with an impression of profound melancholy. "There are days," she writes to her brother, "when one's nature rolls itself up, and becomes a hedgehog. If I had you here at this moment, here close by me, how I should prick you! how sharp and hard!" "Poor soul, poor soul," she cries out to herself another day, "what is the matter, what would you have? Where is that which will do you good? Everything is green, everything is in bloom, all the air has a breath of flowers. How beautiful it is! well, I will go out. No, I should be alone, and all this beauty, when one is alone, is worth nothing. What shall I do then? Read, write, pray, take a basket of sand on my head like that hermit-saint, and walk with it? Yes, work, work! keep busy the body which does mischief to the soul! I have been too little occupied to-day, and that is bad for one, and it gives a certain ennui which I have in me time to ferment."

A certain ennui which I have in me: her wound is there. In vain she follows the counsel of Fénelon: "If God tires you, tell Him that he tires you." No doubt she obtained great and frequent solace and restoration from prayer: "This morning I was suffering; well, at present I am calm,

and this I owe to faith, simply to faith, to an act of faith. I can think of death and eternity without trouble, without alarm. Over a deep of sorrow there floats a divine calm, a suavity which is the work of God only. In vain have I tried other things at a time like this: nothing human comforts the soul, nothing human upholds it:—

A l'enfant il faut sa mère,
A mon âme il faut mon Dieu."

Still the ennui reappears, bringing with it hours of unutterable forlornness, and making her cling to her one great earthly happiness—her affection for her brother—with an intensest, an anxiety, a desperation in which there is something morbid, and by which she is occasionally carried into an irritability, a jealousy, which she herself is the first, indeed, to ensure, which she severely represses, but which nevertheless leaves a sense of pain.

Mdlle. de Guérin's admirers have compared her to Pascal, and in some respects the comparison is just. But she cannot exactly be classed with Pascal, any more than with Saint François de Sales. Pascal is a man, and the inexhaustible power and activity of his mind leave him no leisure for ennui. He has not the sweetness and serenity of the perfect saint; he is, perhaps, "*der strenge, kranke Pascal,—the severe, morbid Pascal*"—as Goethe (and, strange to say, Goethe at twenty-three, an age which usually feels Pascal's charm most profoundly) calls him; but the stress and movement of the lifelong conflict waged in him between his soul and his reason keep him full of fire, full of agitation, and keep his reader, who witnesses this conflict, animated and excited; the sense of forlornness and dejected weariness which clings to Eugénie de Guérin does not belong to Pascal. Eugénie de Guérin is a woman, and longs for a state of firm happiness, for an affection in which she may repose: the inward bliss of Saint Theresa or Fénélon would have satisfied her; denied this, she cannot rest satisfied with the triumphs of self-abasement, with the sombre joy of trampling the pride of life and of reason underfoot, of reducing all human hope and joy to insignificance; she repeats the magnificent words of Bossuet, words which both Catholicism and Protestantism have uttered with indefatigable iteration: "*On trouve au fond de tout le vide et le néant—at the bottom of everything one finds emptiness and nothingness,*" but she feels, as every one but the true mystic must ever feel, their incurable sterility.

She resembles Pascal, however, by the clearness and firmness of her intelligence, going straight and instinctively to the bottom of any matter she is dealing with, and expressing herself about it with incomparable precision; never fumbling with what she has to say, never imperfectly seizing or imperfectly presenting her thought. And to this admirable precision she joins a lightness of touch, a feminine ease and grace, a flowing facility which are her own. "*I do not say,*" writes her brother Maurice, an excellent judge, "*that I find in myself a dearth of expression; but I have not this abundance of yours, this productiveness of soul which streams*

forth, which courses along without ever failing, and always with an infinite charm." And writing to her of some composition of hers, produced after her religious scruples had for a long time kept her from the exercise of her talent : " You see, my dear Tortoise," he writes, " that your talent is no illusion, since after a period I know not how long of poetical inaction, a trial to which any half-talent would have succumbed, it rears its head again more vigorous than ever. It is really heart-breaking to see you repress and bind down, with I know not what scruples, your spirit, which tends with all the force of its nature to develop itself in this direction. Others have made it a case of conscience for you to resist this impulse, and I make it one for you not to follow it." And she says of herself, on one of her freer days : " It is the instinct of my life to write, as it is the instinct of the fountain to flow." The charm of her expression is not a sensuous and imaginative charm like that of Maurice, but rather an intellectual charm ; it comes from the texture of the style rather than from its elements ; it is not so much in the words as in the turn of the phrase, in the happy cast and flow of the sentence. Recluse as she was, she had a great correspondence : every one wished to have letters from her ; and no wonder.

To this strength of intelligence and talent of expression she joined a great force of character. Religion had early possessed itself of this force of character, and reinforced it : in the shadow of the Cévennes, in the sharp and tonic nature of this region of southern France, which has seen the Albigensians, which has seen the Camisards, Catholicism too is fervent and intense. Eugénie de Guérin was brought up amidst strong religious influences, and they found in her a nature on which they could lay firm hold. I have said that she was not a saint of the order of Saint François de Sales or Fénelon ; perhaps she had too keen an intelligence to suffer her to be this, too forcible and impetuous a character. But I did not mean to imply the least doubt of the reality, the profoundness, of her religious life. She was penetrated by the power of religion ; religion was the master-influence of her life ; she derived immense consolations from religion, she earnestly strove to conform her whole nature to it ; if there was an element in her which religion could not perfectly reach, perfectly transmute, she groaned over this element in her, she chid it, she made it bow. Almost every thought in her was brought into harmony with religion ; and what few thoughts were not thus brought into harmony were brought into subjection.

Then she had her affection for her brother ; and this, too, though perhaps there might be in it something a little over-eager, a little too absolute, a little too susceptible, was a pure, a devoted affection. It was not only passionate, it was tender. It was tender, pliant, and self-sacrificing to a degree that not in one nature out of a thousand—of natures with a mind and will like hers—is found attainable. She thus united extraordinary power of intelligence, extraordinary force of character, and extraordinary strength of affection ; and all these under the control of a deep religious feeling.

This is what makes her so remarkable, so interesting. I shall try and

make her speak for herself, that she may show us the characteristic sides of her rare nature with her own inimitable touch.

It must be remembered that her journal is written for Maurice only; in her lifetime no eye but his ever saw it. “*Ceci n'est pas pour le public,*” she writes; “*c'est de l'intime, c'est de l'âme, c'est pour un.*” “This is not for the public; it contains my immost thoughts, my very soul; it is for one.” And Maurice, this *one*, was a kind of second self to her. “We see things with the same eyes; what you find beautiful, I find beautiful; God has made our souls of one piece.” And this genuine confidence in her brother's sympathy gives to the entries in her journal a naturalness and simple freedom rare in such compositions. She felt that he would understand her, and be interested in all that she wrote.

One of the first pages of her journal relates an incident of the home-life of Le Cayla, the smallest detail of which Maurice liked to hear; and in relating it she brings this simple life before us. She is writing in November, 1834:—

“I am furious with the grey cat. The mischievous beast has made away with a little half-frozen pigeon, which I was trying to thaw by the side of the fire. The poor little thing was just beginning to come round: I meant to tame him; he would have grown fond of me; and there is my whole scheme eaten up by a cat! This event, and all the rest of to-day's history, has passed in the kitchen. Here I take up my abode all the morning and a part of the evening, ever since I am without Mimi.* I have to superintend the cook; sometimes papa comes down and I read to him by the oven, or by the fireside, some bits out of the *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*. This book struck Pierril† with astonishment. ‘*Que de mots aqui dédins!*’ What a lot of words there are inside it! This boy is a real original. One evening he asked me if the soul was immortal; then afterwards, what a philosopher was? We had got upon great questions, as you see. When I told him that a philosopher was a person who was wise and learned: ‘Then, mademoiselle, you are a philosopher.’ This was said with an air of simplicity and sincerity which might have made even Socrates take it as a compliment; but it made me laugh so much that my gravity as catechist was gone for that evening. A day or two ago Pierril left us, to his great sorrow: his time with us was up on Saint Brice's day. Now he goes about with his little dog, truffle-hunting. If he comes this way I shall go and ask him if he still thinks I look like a philosopher.”

Her good sense and spirit made her discharge with alacrity her household tasks in this patriarchal life of Le Cayla, and treat them as the most natural thing in the world. She sometimes complains, to be sure, of burning her fingers at the kitchen fire. But when a literary friend of her brother expresses enthusiasm about her and her poetical nature: “The poetess,” she says, “whom this gentleman believes me to be, is an ideal

* The familiar name of her sister Marie.

† A servant-boy at Le Cayla.

being, infinitely removed from the life which is actually mine—a life of occupations, a life of household business, which takes up all my time. How could I make it otherwise? I am sure I do not know; and, besides, my duty is in this sort of life, and I have no wish to escape from it."

Among these occupations of the patriarchal life of the châtelaine of Le Cayla intercourse with the poor fills a prominent place:—

"To-day," she writes on the 9th of December, 1834, "I have been warming myself at every fireside in the village. It is a round which Mimi and I often make, and in which I take pleasure. To-day we have been seeing sick people, and holding forth on doses and sick-room drinks. 'Take this, do that;' and they attend to us just as if we were the doctor. We prescribed shoes for a little thing who was amiss from having gone barefoot; to the brother, who, with a bad headache, was lying quite flat, we prescribed a pillow; the pillow did him good, but I am afraid it will hardly cure him. He is at the beginning of a bad feverish cold, and these poor people live in the filth of their hovels like animals in their stable; the bad air poisons them. When I come home to Le Cayla I seem to be in a palace."

She had books, too; not in abundance, not for the fancying them: the list of her library is small, and it is enlarged slowly and with difficulty. The *Letters of Saint Theresa*, which she had long wished to get, she sees in the hands of a poor servant girl, before she can procure them for herself. "What then?" is her comment: "very likely she makes a better use of them than I could." But she has the *Imitation*, the *Spiritual Works* of Bossuet and Fénelon, the *Lives of the Saints*, Corneille, Racine, André, Chenier, and Lamartine; Madame de Staél's book on Germany, and French translations of Shakspeare's plays, Ossian, the *Vicar of Wakefield*, Scott's *Old Mortality* and *Redgauntlet*, and the *Promessi Sposi* of Manzoni. Above all, she has her own mind; her meditations in the lonely fields, on the oak-grown hill-side of "The Seven Springs;" her meditations and writing in her own room, her *chambrette*, her *délicieuse chez moi*, where every night, before she goes to bed, she opens the window to look out upon the sky—the balmy moonlit sky of Languedoc. This life of reading, thinking, and writing, was the life she liked best, the life that most truly suited her. "I find writing has become almost a necessity to me. Whence does it arise, this impulse to give utterance to the voice of one's spirit, to pour out my thoughts before God and one human being? I say one human being, because I always imagine that you are present, that you see what I write. In the stillness of a life like this my spirit is happy, and, as it were, dead to all that goes on upstairs or downstairs, in the house or out of the house. But this does not last long. 'Come, my poor spirit,' I then say to myself, 'we must go back to the things of this world. And I take my spinning, or a book, or a saucepan, or I play with Wolf or Trilby. Such a life as this I call heaven upon earth.'

Tastes like these, joined with a talent like Mdlle. de Guérin's, naturally

inspire thoughts of literary composition. Such thoughts she had, and perhaps she would have been happier if she had followed them; but she never could satisfy herself that to follow them was quite consistent with the religious life, and her projects of composition were gradually relinquished.

"Would to God that my thoughts, my spirit, had never taken their flight beyond the narrow round in which it is my lot to live. In spite of all that people say to the contrary, I feel that I cannot go beyond my needlework and my spinning without going too far: I feel it, I believe it: well, then, I will keep in my proper sphere; however much I am tempted, my spirit shall not be allowed to occupy itself with great matters until it occupies itself with them in Heaven."

And again:—

"My journal has been untouched for a long while. Do you want to know why? It is because the time seems to me misspent which I spend in writing it. We owe God an account of every minute; and is it not a wrong use of our minutes to employ them in writing a history of our transitory days?"

She overcomes her scruples, and goes on writing the journal; but again and again they return to her. Her brother tells her of the pleasure and comfort something she has written gives to a friend of his in affliction. She answers:—

"It is from the Cross that those thoughts come which your friend finds so soothing, so unspeakably tender. None of them come from me. I feel my own aridity; but I feel, too, that God, when He will, can make an ocean flow upon this bed of sand. It is the same with so many simple souls, from which proceed the most admirable things; because they are in direct relation with God, without false science and without pride. And thus I am gradually losing my taste for books; I say to myself, 'What can they teach me which I shall not one day know in Heaven? let God be my master and my study here!' I try to make Him so, and I find myself the better for it. I read little; I go out little; I plunge myself in the inward life. How infinite are the sayings, doings, feelings, events of that life! Oh, if you could but see them! But what avails it to make them known? God alone should be admitted to the sanctuary of the soul."

Beautifully as she says all this, one cannot, I think, read it without a sense of disquietude, without a presentiment that this ardent spirit is forcing itself from its natural bent, that the beatitude of the true mystic will never be its earthly portion. And yet how simple and charming is her picture of the life of religion which she chose as her ark of refuge, and in which she desired to place all her happiness:

"Cloaks, clogs, umbrellas, all the apparatus of winter, went with us this morning to Andillac, where we have passed the whole day; some of it at the curé's house, the rest in church. How I like this life of a country Sunday, with its activity, its journeys to church, its liveliness! You find all your neighbours on the road; you have a curtsey from

every woman you meet, and then, as you go along, such a talk about the poultry, the sheep and cows, the good man and the children ! My great delight is to give a kiss to these children, and to see them run away and hide their blushing faces in their mother's gown. They are alarmed at *las doumaisélots*,* as at a being of another world. One of these little things said the other day to its grandmother, who was talking of coming to see us : ' *Minino*, you mustn't go to that castle ; there is a black hole there.' What is the reason that in all ages the noble's château has been an object of terror ? Is it because of the horrors that were committed there in old times ? I suppose so.'

This vague horror of the château, still lingering in the mind of the French peasant fifty years after he has stormed it, is indeed curious, and is one of the thousand indications how unlike aristocracy on the Continent has been to aristocracy in England. But this is one of the great matters with which Mdlle. de Guérin would not have us occupied ; let us pass to the subject of Christmas in Languedoc :

" Christmas is come ; the beautiful festival, the one I love most, and which gives me the same joy as it gave the shepherds of Bethlehem. In real truth, one's whole soul sings with joy at this beautiful coming of God upon earth,—a coming which here is announced on all sides of us by music and by our charming *nadalet*.† Nothing at Paris can give you a notion of what Christmas is with us. You have not even the midnight mass. We all of us went to it, papa at our head, on the most perfect night possible. Never was there a finer sky than ours was that midnight,—so fine that papa kept perpetually throwing back the hood of his cloak, that he might look up at the sky. The ground was white with hoar-frost, but we were not cold ; besides, the air, as we met it, was warmed by the bundles of blazing torchwood which our servants carried in front of us to light us on our way. It was delightful, I do assure you ; and I should like you to have seen us there on our road to church, in those lanes with the bushes along their banks, as white as if they were in flower. The hoar-frost makes the most lovely flowers. We saw a long spray so beautiful that we wanted to take it with us as a garland for the communion table, but it melted in our hands : all flowers fade so soon ! I was very sorry about my garland ; it was mournful to see it drip away, and get smaller and smaller every minute."

The religious life is at bottom everywhere alike ; but it is curious to note the variousness of its setting and outward circumstance. Catholicism has these so different from Protestantism ! and in Catholicism these accessories have, it cannot be denied, a nobleness and amplitude which in Protestantism is often wanting to them. In Catholicism they have, from the antiquity of this form of religion, from its pretensions to universality, from its really wide-spread prevalence, from its sensuousness, something European, august, and imaginative : in Protestantism they often have,

* The young lady.

† A peculiar peal rung at Christmas-time by the church-bells of Languedoc.

from its inferiority in all these respects, something provincial, mean and prosaic. In revenge, Protestantism has a future before it, a prospect of growth in alliance with the vital movement of modern society ; while Catholicism appears to be bent on widening the breach between itself and the modern spirit, to be fatally losing itself in the multiplication of dogmas, Mariolatry, and miracle-mongering. But the style and circumstance of actual Catholicism is grander than its present tendency, and the style and circumstance of Protestantism is meaner than its tendency. While I was reading the journal of Mdlle. de Guérin, there came into my hands the memoir and poems of a young Englishwoman, Miss Emma Tatham ; and one could not but be struck with the singular contrast which the two lives, in their setting rather than in their inherent quality, present. Miss Tatham had not, certainly, Mdlle. de Guérin's talent, but she had a sincere vein of poetic feeling, a genuine aptitude for composition. Both were fervent Christians, and so far, the two lives have a real resemblance ; but in the setting of them, what a difference ! The Frenchwoman is a Catholic in Languedoc ; the Englishwoman is a Protestant at Margate—Margate, that brick-and-mortar image of English Protestantism, representing it in all its prose, all its uncomeliness,—let me add, all its salubrity. Between the external form and fashion of these two lives, between the Catholic Mdlle. de Guérin's *nadalet* at the Languedoc Christmas—her chapel of moss at Easter-time—her daily reading of the life of a saint, carrying her to the most diverse times, places, and peoples—her quoting, when she wants to fix her mind upon the staunchness which the religious aspirant needs, the words of Saint Macedonius to a hunter whom he met in the mountains, “I pursue after God, as you pursue after game”—her quoting, when she wants to break a village girl of disobedience to her mother, the story of the ten disobedient children whom at Hippo St. Augustine saw palsied ;—between all this and the bare, blank, narrowly English setting of Miss Tatham's Protestantism, her “union in church-fellowship with the worshippers at Hawley-Square Chapel, Margate ;” her “singing, with soft, sweet voice, the animating lines—

My Jesus to know, and feel his blood flow,
‘Tis life everlasting, ‘tis heaven below ;”

her “young female teachers belonging to the Sunday-school,” and her “Mr. Thomas Rowe, a venerable class-leader,”—what a dissimilarity ! In the ground of the two lives, a likeness ; in all their circumstance, what unlikeness ! An unlikeness, it will be said, in that which is non-essential and indifferent. Non-essential—yes ; indifferent—no. The signal want of grace and charm in English Protestantism's setting of its religious life is not an indifferent matter ; it is a real weakness. *This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.*

I have said that the present tendency of Catholicism—the Catholicism of the main body of the Catholic clergy and laity—seems likely to exaggerate rather than to remove all that in this form of religion is most repugnant to reason ; but this Catholicism was not that of Mdlle. de Guérin.

The insufficiency of her Catholicism comes from a doctrine which Protestantism, too, has adopted, although Protestantism, from its inherent element of freedom, may find it easier to escape from it; a doctrine with a certain attraction for all noble natures, but, in the modern world at any rate, incurably sterile,—the doctrine of the emptiness and nothingness of human life, of the superiority of renouncement to activity, of quietism to energy; the doctrine which makes effort for things on this side of the grave a folly, and joy in things on this side of the grave a sin. But her Catholicism is remarkably free from the faults which Protestants commonly think inseparable from Catholicism; the relation to the priest, the practice of confession, assume, when she speaks of them, an aspect which is not that under which Exeter Hall knows them, but which—unless one is of the number of those who prefer regarding that by which men and nations die to regarding that by which they live—one is glad to study. “*La confession*,” she says twice in her journal, “*n'est qu'une expansion du repentir dans l'amour* ;” and her weekly journey to the confessional in the little church of Cahuzac is her “*cher pèlerinage* ;” the little church is the place where she has “*laisse tant de misères* :”—

“This morning,” she writes one 28th of November, “I was up before daylight, dressed quickly, said my prayers, and started with Marie for Cahuzac. When we got there the chapel was occupied, which I was not sorry for. I like not to be hurried, and to have time, before I go in, to lay bare my whole soul before God. This often takes me a long time, because my thoughts are apt to be flying about like these autumn leaves. At ten o'clock I was on my knees, listening to words the most salutary that were ever spoken; and I went away feeling myself a better being. Every burden thrown off leaves us with a sense of brightness; and when the soul has laid down the load of its sins at God's feet, it feels as if it had wings. What an admirable thing is confession! What comfort, what light, what strength is given me every time after I have said, *I have sinned*.”

This blessing of confession is the greater, she says, “the more the heart of the priest to whom we confide our repentance is like that divine heart which ‘has so loved us.’ This is what attaches me to M. Bories.” M. Bories was the curé of her parish, a man no longer young, and of whose loss, when he was about to leave them, she thus speaks:—

“What a grief for me! how much I lose in losing this faithful guide of my conscience, heart, and mind, of my whole self which God had appointed to be in his charge, and which let itself be in his charge so gladly! He knew the resolves which God had put in my heart, and I had need of his help to follow them. Our new curé cannot supply his place: he is so young! and then he seems so inexperienced, so undecided! It needs firmness to pluck a soul out of the midst of the world, and to uphold it against the assaults of flesh and blood. It is Saturday, my day for going to Cahuzac; I am just going there, perhaps I shall come back more tranquil. God has always given me some good thing there, in that chapel, where I have left behind me so many miseries.”

Such is confession for her when the priest is worthy ; and, when he is not worthy, she knows how to separate the man from the office :—

" To-day I am going to do something which I dislike ; but I will do it, with God's help. Do not think I am on my way to the stake ; it is only that I am going to confess to a priest in whom I have not confidence, but who is the only one here. In this act of religion, the man must always be separated from the priest, and sometimes the man must be annihilated."

The same clear sense, the same freedom from superstition, shows itself in all her religious life. She tells us, to be sure, how once, when she was a little girl, she stained a new frock, and on praying, in her alarm, to an image of the Virgin which hung in her room, saw the stains vanish : even the most austere Protestant will not judge such Mariolatry as this very harshly. But, in general, the Virgin Mary fills, in the religious parts of her journal, no prominent place ; it is Jesus, not Mary. " Oh, how well has Jesus said : ' Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.' It is only there, only in the bosom of God, that we can rightly weep, rightly rid ourselves of our burden." And again : " The mystery of suffering makes one grasp the belief of something to be expiated, something to be won. I see it in Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrow. *It was necessary that the Son of Man should suffer.* That is all we know in the troubles and calamities of life."

And who has ever spoken of justification more impressively and piously than Mdlle. de Guérin speaks of it, when, after reckoning the number of minutes she has lived, she exclaims :—

" My God, what have we done with all these minutes of ours, which Thou, too, wilt one day reckon ? Will there be any of them to count for eternal life ? will there be many of them ? will there be one of them ? ' If thou, O Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it ? ' This close scrutiny of our time may well make us tremble, all of us who have advanced more than a few steps in life ; for God will judge us otherwise than as he judges the lilies of the field. I have never been able to understand the security of those who place their whole reliance, in presenting themselves before God, upon a good conduct in the ordinary relations of human life. As if all our duties were confined within the narrow sphere of this world ! To be a good parent, a good child, a good citizen, a good brother or sister, is not enough to procure entrance into the kingdom of heaven. God demands other things besides these kindly social virtues, of him whom he means to crown with an eternity of glory."

And, with this zeal for the spirit and power of religion, what prudence in her counsels of religious practice ; what discernment, what measure ! She has been speaking of the charm of the *Lives of the Saints*, and she goes on :—

" Notwithstanding this, the *Lives of the Saints* seem to me, for a great many people, dangerous reading. I would not recommend them to a

young girl, or even to some women who are no longer young. What one reads has such power upon one's feelings; and these, even in seeking God, sometimes go astray. Alas, we have seen it in poor C.'s case. What care one ought to take with a young person; with what she reads, what she writes, her society, her prayers, all of them matters which demand a mother's tender watchfulness! I remember many things I did at fourteen, which my mother, had she lived, would not have let me do. I would have done anything for God's sake; I would have cast myself into an oven, and assuredly things like that are not God's will: he is not pleased by the hurt one does to one's health through that ardent but ill-regulated piety which, while it impairs the body, often leaves many a fault flourishing. And, therefore, Saint François de Sales used to say to the nuns who asked his leave to go barefoot: 'Change your brains, and keep your shoes.'

Meanwhile Maurice, in a five years' absence, and amid the distractions of Paris, lost, or seemed to his sister to lose, something of his fondness for his home and its inmates; he certainly lost his early religious habits and feelings. It is on this latter loss that Mdlle. de Guérin's journal oftenest touches,—with infinite delicacy, but with infinite anguish:—

"Oh! the agony of being in fear for a soul's salvation, who can describe it! That which caused our Saviour the keenest suffering, in the agony of his Passion, was not so much the thought of the torments he was to endure, as the thought that these torments would be of no avail for a multitude of sinners; for all those who set themselves against their redemption, or who do not care for it. The mere anticipation of this obstinacy and this heedlessness had power to make sorrowful, even unto death, the divine Son of Man. And this feeling all Christian souls, according to the measure of faith and love granted them, more or less share."

Maurice returned to Le Cayla in the summer of 1837, and passed six months there. This meeting entirely restored the union between him and his family. "These six months with us," writes his sister, "he ill, and finding himself so loved by us all, had entirely reattached him to us. Five years without seeing us had perhaps made him a little lose sight of our affection for him; having found it again, he met it with all the strength of his own. He had so firmly renewed, before he left us, all family ties, that nothing but death could have broken them." The separation in religious matters between the brother and sister gradually diminished, and before Maurice died it had ceased. I have elsewhere spoken of Maurice's religious feeling and its character. It is probable that his divergence from his sister in this sphere of religion was never so wide as she feared, and that his reunion with her was never so complete as she hoped. "His errors were passed," she says, "his illusions were cleared away; by the call of his nature, by original disposition, he had come back to sentiments of order. I knew all, I followed each of his steps; out of the fiery sphere of the passions (which held him but a little moment) I saw him pass into the sphere of the Christian life. It was a beautiful soul, the soul of

Maurice." But the illness which had caused his return to Le Cayla reappeared after he got back to Paris in the winter of 1837-8. Again he seemed to recover; and his marriage with a young Creole lady, Mdlle. Caroline de Gervain, took place in the autumn of 1838. At the end of September in that year Mdlle. de Guérin had joined her brother in Paris; she was present at his marriage, and stayed with him and his wife for some months afterwards. Her journal recommences in April, 1839; zealously as she had promoted her brother's marriage, cordial as were her relations with her sister-in-law, it is evident that a sense of loss, of loneliness, invades her, and sometimes weighs her down. She writes in her journal on the 4th of May:—

"God knows when we shall see one another again! My own Maurice, must it be our lot to live apart, to find that this marriage, which I had so much share in bringing about, which I hoped would keep us so much together, leaves us more asunder than ever? For the present and for the future, this troubles me more than I can say. My sympathies, my inclinations, carry me more towards you than towards any other member of our family. I have the misfortune to be fonder of you than of anything else in the world, and my heart had from of old built in you its happiness. Youth gone and life declining, I looked forward to quitting the scene with Maurice. At any time of life a great affection is a great happiness; the spirit comes to take refuge in it entirely. O delight and joy which will never be your sister's portion! Only in the direction of God shall I find an issue for my heart to love, as it has the notion of loving, as it has the power of loving."

From such complainings, in which there is undoubtedly something morbid,—complainings which she herself blamed, to which she seldom gave way, but which, in presenting her character, it is not just to put wholly out of sight,—she was called by the news of an alarming return of her brother's illness. For some days the entries in her journal show her agony of apprehension. "He coughs, he coughs still! Those words keep echoing for ever in my ears, and pursue me wherever I go; I cannot look at the leaves on the trees without thinking that the winter will come, and that then the consumptive die." Then she went to him and brought him back by slow stages to Le Cayla, dying. He died on the 19th of July, 1839.

Thenceforward the energy of life ebbed in her; but the main chords of her being, the chord of affection, the chord of religious longing, the chord of intelligence, the chord of sorrow, gave, so long as they answered to the touch at all, a deeper and finer sound than ever. Always she saw before her "that beloved pale face;" "that beautiful head, with all its different expressions, smiling, speaking, suffering, dying," regarded her always:—

"I have seen his coffin in the same room, in the same spot where I remember seeing, when I was a very little girl, his cradle, when I was brought home from Gaillac, where I was then staying, for his christening.

This christening was a grand one, full of rejoicing, more than that of any of the rest of us; specially marked. I enjoyed myself greatly, and went back to Gaillac next day, charmed with my new little brother. Two years afterwards I came home, and brought with me for him a frock of my own making. I dressed him in the frock, and took him out with me along by the warren at the north of the house, and there he walked a few steps alone, his first walking alone, and I ran with delight to tell my mother the news : ‘Maurice, Maurice has begun to walk by himself !’—Recollections which, coming back to-day, break one’s heart !”

The shortness and suffering of her brother’s life filled her with an agony of pity. “Poor beloved soul, you have had hardly any happiness here below ; your life has been so short, your repose so rare. O God, uphold me, stablish my heart in thy faith ! Alas, I have too little of this supporting me ! How we have gazed at him, and loved him, and kissed him—his wife, and we, his sisters ; he lying lifeless in his bed, his head on the pillow as if he were asleep ! Then we followed him to the churchyard, to the grave, to his last resting-place, and prayed over him, and wept over him ; and we are here again, and I am writing to him again, as if he were staying away from home, as if he were in Paris. My beloved one, can it be, shall we never see one another again on earth ?”

But in heaven?—and here, though love and hope finally prevailed, the very passion of the sister’s longing sometimes inspired torturing inquietudes :—

“I am broken down with misery. I want to see him. Every moment I pray to God to grant me this grace. Heaven, the world of spirits, is it so far from us ? O depth, O mystery of the other life which separates us ! I, who was so eagerly anxious about him, who wanted so to know all that happened to him,—wherever he may be now, it is over ! I follow him into the three abodes, I stop wistfully in the place of bliss, I pass on to the place of suffering—to the gulf of fire. My God, my God, no ! Not there let my brother be ! not there ! And he is not : his soul, the soul of Maurice, among the lost horrible fear, no ! But in purgatory, where the soul is cleansed by suffering, where the failings of the heart are expiated, the doublings of the spirit, the half-yieldings to evil ? Perhaps my brother is there and suffers, and calls to us amidst his anguish of repentance, as he used to call to us amidst his bodily suffering : ‘Help me, you who love me.’ Yes, beloved one, by prayer. I will go and pray ; prayer has been such a power to me, and I will pray to the end. Prayer ! Oh ! and prayer for the dead ! it is the dew of purgatory.”

Often, alas, the gracious dew would not fall ; the air of her soul was parched ; the arid wind, which was somewhere in the depths of her being, blew. She marks in her journal the first of May, “this return of the loveliest month in the year,” only to keep up the old habit : even the month of May can no longer give her any pleasure : “Tout est changé—all is changed.” She is crushed by “the misery which has nothing good in it, the tearless, dry misery, which bruises the heart like a hammer.”

"I am dying to everything. I am dying of a slow moral agony, a condition of unutterable suffering. Lie there, my poor journal! be forgotten with all this world which is fading away from me. I will write here no more until I come to life again, until God re-awakens me out of this tomb in which my soul lies buried. Maurice, my beloved! it was not thus with me when I had *you*! The thought of Maurice could revive me from the most profound depression: to have him in the world was enough for me. With Maurice, to be buried alive would have not seemed dull to me."

And, as a burden to this funereal strain, the old *vide et néant* of Bossuet, profound, solemn, sterile:—

"So beautiful in the morning, and in the evening, *that!* how the thought disenchants one, and turns one from the world! I can understand that Spanish grandee, who, after lifting up the winding-sheet of a beautiful queen, threw himself into a cloister and became a great saint. I would have all my friends at La Trappe, in the interest of their eternal welfare. Not that in the world one cannot be saved, not that there are not in the world duties to be discharged as sacred and as beautiful as there are in the cloister, but"

And there she stops, and a day or two afterwards her journal comes to an end. A few fragments, a few letters carry us on a little later, but after the 22nd of August, 1845, there is nothing. To make known her brother's genius to the world was the one task she set herself after his death; in 1840 came Madame Sand's noble tribute to him in the *Revue des deux Mondes*; then followed projects of raising a yet more enduring monument to his fame, by collecting and publishing his scattered compositions: these projects, I have already said, were baffled; Mdlle. de Guérin's letter of the 22nd of August, 1845, relates to this disappointment. In silence, during nearly three years more, she faded away at Le Cayla. She died on the 31st of May, 1848.

M. Trébutien has accomplished the pious task in which Mdlle. de Guérin was baffled, and has established Maurice's fame; by publishing this journal he has established Eugénie's also. She was very different from her brother; but she too, like him, had that in her which preserves a reputation. Her soul has the same characteristic quality as his talent, —*distinction*. Of this quality the world is impatient; it chafes against it, rails at it, insults it, hates it: it ends by receiving its influence, and by undergoing its law. This quality at last inexorably corrects the world's blunders, and fixes the world's ideals. It procures that the popular poet shall not finally pass for a Pindar, nor the popular historian for a Tacitus, nor the popular preacher for a Bossuet. To the circle of spirits marked by this rare quality, Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin belong; they will take their place in the sky which these inhabit, and shine close to one another, *lucida sidera*.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

To Correspondents.

"Tis in the middle of the night; and as with weary hand we write, "Here endeth C. M. volume seven," we turn our grateful eyes to heaven. The fainting soul, oppressed long, expands and blossoms into song; but why 'twere difficult to state, since here commenceth volume eight.

And ah, what mischiefs him environ who claps the editorial tiar on! 'Tis but a paper thing, no doubt; but those who don it soon find out the weight of lead—ah me, how weary!—one little foolscap sheet may carry. Pleasing, we hear, to gods and men was Mr. William Gladstone when he calmed the paper-duty fuss; but oh, 'twas very hard on us. Before he took the impost off, one gentleman was found enough (he was Herculean, but still!) to bear the letters from Cornhill; two men are needed now, and these are clearly going at the knees.

Yet happy hearts had we to-day if one in fifteen hundred, say, of all the packets, white and blue, which we diurnally go through, yielded an ounce of sterling brains, or aught but headache for our pains. Ah, could the Correspondent see the Editor in his misery, no more injurious ink he'd shed, but tears of sympathy instead. What is this tale of straws and bricks? A hen with fifty thousand chicks clapt in Sahara's sandy plain to peck the wilderness for grain—in that unhappy fowl is seen the despot of a Magazine. Only one difference we find; but that is most important, mind. Instinct compels *her* patient beak; ours—in all modesty we speak—is kept by CONSCIENCE (sternly chaste) pegging the literary waste. Our barns are stored, our garners—well, the stock in them's considerable; yet when we're to the desert brought, again comes back the melting thought that somewhere in its depths may hide one little seed, which, multiplied in our half acre on Cornhill, might all the land with gladness fill. Experience then no more we heed; but, though we seldom find the seed, we read, and read, and read, and read.

Never of us shall it be said, we left a hopeful line unread. When to our groaning desk we turn, our bowels in two senses yearn: in one, at our own toils they sicken (alas, poor editor! poor chicken!), but on the whole they rumble most in grief for others' labour lost. It is so sad! Of bards a score, of rhapsodists a dozen more; of critics five; historians six; eight aspirants in politics; eleven doctors of revenue; twelve comic writers spie and span new; satirists (not the sort of men to be put off so lightly) ten; metaphysicians twenty-three—more than there *ever* used to be; novelists (female) forty-nine, and two male persons in that line—these at the present hour await the sentence of impartial Fate. The thought of all this useless toil—this waste of energy and oil, these fair ambitions fondly nurst, but

even in the cradle curst—is really grievous; pray believe, O brethren, that we really grieve.

But what is to be done? We know that long as words and waters flow, and people may to Fortune go by way of Paternoster Row, and gain is fame and fame is gain, we may importunate in vain: still on must roll the unfiltered flood, and leave us sticking in the mud. Well, we accept our fate; resigned to suffer meekly for mankind; and heaven forefend that we should ever discourage promising endeavour. It is our hope from day to day—the hope, our comfort and our stay—to find such promise, or a ghost of it: *we* promise that we'll make the most of it.

How gladly, too! Well, there be some who could unfold—but we'll be mum. B knows how we jumped at him; A!—we never shall forget the day when, sticking to our duties, we were busy drinking up the sea in quest of pearls, and haply came upon *that* pearl, that priceless gem! *Maman*, so fond, so young, so bright, you have kind secrets of delight, profoundly sweet, divinely dim, unshared, unguessed at even by *him*; but nobody can ever know the flattering thrill, the joyous throe which agitates this breast whene'er we scent a new contributor. You think, ma'am, that's exaggeration; but just conceive the situation. Suppose before you'd time to say “Blest hope!” the precious cherub lay—papa's own image!—in your arms; and then before those sweet alarms about the future of his nose, his locks, his toothy-pegs, arose—the loveliest curls entwined his pate, his pegs came, in a perfect set, the darling pug grew nobly Greek, the Dear got on his legs to speak, and talked and laughed, and leapt and ran, and in some thirty minutes' span became a handsome grave young man! Conceive that, madam, of your boy!—conceive your own swift shocks of joy, the dread that, oh, it cannot be! ceasing in splendid certainty!—this done, you possibly *may* know our flattering thrill and joyous throe.

For that's how geniuses are born to us upon the hill of Corn. Concealed from all the world they lie, in manuscript and modesty; we spy them out as Pharaoh's daughter spied little Moses near the water; and while we gaze, the glorious thing—poet, philosopher and king, thinker of thoughts that father creeds—rises full-statured through the reeds. Our joy, our hope, our happiness, no common language can express. Ho, boy! bring hither wreaths of roses, one for us and one for Moses. He shall be crowned before we sleep! For now—ah, now we're all a-creep! Our very souls to gooseflesh turn lest other editors should learn what we have learned, and snatch the prize almost before our hungry eyes. 'Tis but a moment, and we stand before our genius hat in hand: ours, for in chains of gold he's bound!—ours, for with wreaths of CORN he's crowned!—There, modest spirit! that's the way we jumped at B and courted A: mere mortal men of art and sense, unspoiled by tinsel or pretence. If what they've done your pen can do, take courage and be courted too. The famous great we count our own; send us, kind heaven, the great unknown!

This is our worst disaster; when some new star swims into our ken, twinkles a little while, and then unluckily swims out again: and that will happen in the space of twenty periods—more or less. Again we search the rayless dark, again we catch the fitful spark! Blink! wink! 'tis gone! quenched in a sea of boundless mediocrity. Now that's provoking. There's a kind of marshy, foggy, fenny mind, whose Jack-o'-lantern wit deludes into the sappiest solitudes unwary females, guardsmen, all the innocent uncritical. They don't concern us; our lament is made for nobler spirits, spent in one expression to a page of unillumined verbiage. We flounder on with ardent stare, perfectly happy, for our share, to catch a thought, a gleam of wit from time to time, and ponder it. But for the rest, what can be done? O Lucifer! unhappy son of mornings always at the dawn, dispel the muddy vapours drawn from chaos that obscure your light, or hasten to go out in night. You only bother us; and yet—no, don't go out, but try to get less intermittent in your way of adding to the light of day. We'll wait; we'll keep the telescope of watchful, patient, eager hope upon your efforts, till we're sure you really must remain obscure; or till your evanescent rays kindle into a lasting blaze. Why not? The comets, people say, will all be planets one fine day; and we have known some authors very, very, *very* commentary, who have got steadier, and are a good large useful kind of star. Some brains to start with, and the rest is done by industry and taste. Who tries with these, and then complains of failure, starts without the brains.

But now what *have* we said? This is a most vexatious business! To swell the number of our foes, to fortify the hearts of those who are the terrors of our lot: that, most undoubtedly, was not what this discursion was begun for; but now we have done it, and are done for. Yes, we foreknow how it will be. "Metaphysicians twenty-three?" Metaphysicians by the gross! Sermons and satires by the toss! Ballads in faggots of a hundred! Heavens! how ingenuously we've blundered! The murderer's out, the secret's said; and those reports so widely spread abroad by people whom we fee to charge us with ferocity, they all go for nothing. Very well, we cast away horn, hoof, and tail, and unreservedly confess ourselves a Sin of Tenderness. Our table groans, say: well, we own, that hearing it, we also groan. That's natural; but, we declare, we only groan—we never swear. Our great long-suffering is such that really we don't mind it much; and nothing can be more sincere, or serious, or blunt, than we are when we aver that since the wand of office came into our hand we've humbly served whoever sought to do us service: as we ought. But to those geniuses who will persist in torturing us still with odes to Memory: to My Aunt; Lines to X. Y. Z. Ampeasant; the Skylark; Hints on Etiquette; Thoughts on the Policy of Pitt, the Currency, etcetera, we most respectfully demur, submitting, what they cannot learn too early, that the worm will turn!

Ah, no more 'tis night, for there comes the morning debonair: Ave, O Aurora fair! What though every ballad-singer celebrates your rosy finger,—though the praises of your hair drive us daily to despair, Ave, O Aurora fair! Come and win the world from slumber, dulcetly, like our new number; for your beauties are our own, daughter of Hyperion! If you doubt us, only wait till you dawn on volume eight. You shall lead your jocund hours,—we our gay contributors; and heaven above and earth below in saffron rivalry shall glow. Pleased we see the various train in full rehearsal on the plain—with “pomp, and feast, and revelry—with masque and antic pageantry.” Foremost in the bright array, noblest Fiction leads the way; next Romance, with mystic measure, thrills the soul with dreadful pleasure; while, with swift and gracious feet, trips the lively Novelette. Poesy, divinely bright, scatters roses red and white, where Science treads, correctly cool, a fascinating *pas de seul*. See where Satire, ever bland, walks with Essay hand in hand—Essay, she whose thoughtful mien sweetly sobers all the scene. Troop on troop they hither come to the sound of pipe and drum; and darkness, as they come, is hurled backward o'er a waking world.

With the waning of the moon wanes this literary lune. If Aurora would but stay!—but she hates the wcrk-a-day, and the work-a-day is here, brazen, insatiate, severe. Sleep awhile, O weary brain, and wake to gravity again.



JOHN H. S. QUICK.

